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Soviet Literature

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PYOTR PAVLENKO

HAPPINESS

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

"Old chap,

I had a letter from Alexandra Ivanovna Goreva. There are a few lines in it about you. Here they are:

'Do you happen to know where Voropayev is? He was seriously wounded and evacuated to the base. They say he has been invalided out, but we don't know anything for certain. He's forgotten us all.

'If you do hear anything and find out where he is and what he's doing, drop me a line, will you? My field post number is the same.'"

Voropayev crumpled the letter and dropped it overboard. The steamer was approaching the breakwater. It was getting dark and the mountains were already in shadow. In infinite shades of blue, massed with striking picturesqueness, they hung over the town like low thunder clouds. The grey stretches of orchards suggested a dense mist wreathing at the entrance to a gorge, while the sharply-outlined shadows of the clouds on the hill slopes looked like broad, gloomy gullies.

The enamel-like water of the little bay reflected the darker changing blues of the hills, the delicate colour of the evening sky and something fathomless, fine and beautiful that, unseen, hovered over the sea—perhaps it was the music from distant houses, or the scent of the woods descending heavily on the waters, or the rich and powerful voice of a woman singing over the radio, a voice floating so freely over earth and sea and so closely akin to the landscape that it belonged, it seemed, to some creature of the hills.

Still some distance from the shore, while the steamer was cautiously entering the harbour, Voropayev could make out the disfigured embankment, the ruins of the quay and the bomb-torn jetty. He winced involuntarily—the same sense of pain had overcome him more than once in Stalingrad, in Kiev, and wherever he saw the tracks of the Germans.

Silent now were the jetty and the embankment, where in pre-war days noisy, cheerful crowds had gathered to meet the vessels from Odessa or Batumi and a babel in at least six different languages had been heard.

A few German pillboxes of porous limestone thrust themselves up drearily where formerly there had been floating restaurants and cafes. The spars and timbers of what once had been a landing barge lay at the shore.

"This was no place to come to," Voropayev thought gloomily, wondering anxiously where he was to put up and what ought to be his first moves in this half-dead place, so unlike its old self.

"It's a dead town," the captain remarked to him, appraising the shore as if it were some newly discovered harbour. Then he made a despairing gesture of the hand.

Voropayev leaned over the captain's bridge.

About a hundred and fifty passengers, new settlers coming from the Kuban, had gathered excitedly at the top of the gangway, shouting hoarsely and jostling each other.

Cows were being lifted out of the hold. Swinging awkwardly in mid-air

from the derricks they bellowed in terror.

Cossack women with their skirts tucked up darted about the jetty, their voices raised in different keys to soothe the frightened cattle; some dragged pigs tied up in sacks, some carried poultry in baskets, or bounced up and down small children who were half stupified with seasickness, while others held with gravity and dignity, ignoring the men's gibes, big fancy flowerpots with spreading ornamental plants, brought here for no obvious reason.

"Here's a to-do!" an elderly Cossack remarked to a young woman, apparently his daughter-in-law, while he looked doubtfully at the hills and the sea. "See, though it's the month of December, it looks like May. . . ."

The remark seemed to afford the woman no comfort. She gave a long snuffle, ready to cry.

"Taman, Starosteblievy, and Slaviansk people—come up for registration! Disabled men, look for Stoiko! Soldiers' wives, this way!"

"Hey, Stepanych," several voices called from the quay to the elderly Cossack. "What are you waiting for?" And he got busy, nodding his head vigorously to those who had called him, and, glancing timidly about him at the people, started down the gangway.

"You'd think they were Robinson Crusoes, damn them!" the captain said. "And what the devil brought them here? . . Are you with them as well, Comrade Colonel?" he asked.

"No, I'm on my own," Voropayev replied, struggling with a fit of coughing, and stopped short.

He could not bring himself to say that he had been discharged from hospital and invalided out of the army, that he had come here with the intention of acquiring a little house, though there were several other men like him on board, on crutches and wearing the red and gold wound stripes, as he had noticed the day before.

"Are you a local man?" the captain enquired.

"Well, I might call myself local," Voropayev replied to get rid of further questions.

"Oh, then that's different, that's all right. Otherwise—what sort of a life could you have here? Don't be in such a hurry to go ashore, though," he went on, seeing that Voropayev was about to go down the gangway. "They'll knock you off your feet and trample the life out of you before you've time to look round. I see it isn't long since you lost your leg. You're not used to the new one yet. . . What's all this migration business for, where's the sense in it, I wonder? Why, there isn't as much as a doornail to be found in the place. The war's used up everything, and the people here think all they have to do is to ask and it'll be given. . . They'll clear out before the winter sets in, I'm telling you. What an idea—no sense starting life again on bare stones! Sheer nonsense! Gipsy ways, that's all."

No longer listening to the garrulous captain, Voropayev carefully descended from the bridge, holding his crutch with his left hand and steadying himself with his right hand on the rail. A sailor helped him down the gangway with his valise and knapsack and at last Voropayev with a sense of satisfaction felt the firm ground beneath his foot. His head was pleasantly dizzy. Coughing, he started off slowly in the direction of the town.

The jetty and the open space in front of the ruined passenger shed, where the large Motor Transport offices had been before the war, a bustling place at all times, were both deserted.

The quayside opened up before him in uninhabitable ruins.

The town had shifted all to one side, farther from the sea. At the Party Committee office, which was very quiet, too, with tiny, homemade kerosene lamps on the desks in the once splendid but now empty and shabby rooms, people were amazed to hear that a sick colonel with one leg had arrived, on leave, as he said, without booking a place in advance at a sanatorium: that would have been bad enough, but still, there were a couple of sanatoria opened already, but it seemed he had come here on his own with the intention of renting a little house and making a living somehow.

It was to this general astonishment, very likely, that he owed the fact that Korytov, the Secretary of the Party District Committee, was notified at once of his arrival. This man glanced out into the waiting room, took Voropayev

by the arm, led him into his office, helped him to an armchair and looked at him suspiciously before examining his papers.

Korytov, yellow and lined, looked like a sick man and his eyes, as they met those of a strange newcomer, wore a puzzled look that amounted almost to alarm. His face did not seem in the least likeable. Flaccid and immobile, it was unattractive right from the very beginning.

"You don't take me for a crook, by any chance?"

The secretary raised his eyebrows, but did not reply.

"I must admit, it's the first time I've met anyone like you," he said after he had read the documents several times over. "What will you start with, Colonel?" he enquired, and proceeded to answer himself, as though he had not noticed Voropayev's embarrassment.

"The first thing is to get fixed up for the night. The next thing is to get a meal somewhere. This is out of the question today, my friend. We get only one hot meal a day. You know these parts pretty well, don't you?" And, without waiting for an answer, went on:

"Then you can choose whatever you like. Are you thinking of going to work or living on your pension?"

While he made these enquiries, the secretary scrutinized Voropayev with hostility and suspicion; his eyes and indeed his whole aspect reflected a distinct dread of unpleasant complications, inevitable with this absurd colonel who had arrived to spend his leave here while the war was still on, and claimed a house and garden as though he were at least a three-star Hero of the Soviet Union. Korytov himself lived in a house with no glass in its windows.

"Listen to what I have to say, Comrade Korytov," Voropayev began, cautiously withdrawing his papers from the secretary's hands. "I want to tell you at once that I can see I was a damned fool to come here. But the long and short of it is, I shall try to fix myself up somehow, and in such a way as not to be a burden to you."

"You won't be a burden to me, I'll see to that quick enough," the secretary declared with conviction and animosity, "and the point is that whether you try to be a burden or not, you'll get nothing out of that."

"I see—I see. So I should try to find a place to sleep first and then drop in to talk to you about a job, eh?"

"I suppose you couldn't take on the prosecutor's job?" Korytov said, following his own train of thought. "But how about lecturing? It's nice, clean work, as you know, and I wouldn't give you too much to do, and still you'd have your proper rations and one thing and another. . . Let's say you'll take on the job of a lecturer. Zhurina!" he called out hastily, "Get in touch with someone from the personnel department! . . It's a bother having no telephone . . . voice communication everywhere, same as in hand-to-hand fighting!"

No one entered the office and Korytov, with the hasty movements with which he had taken Voropayev's papers, pulled out from the desk drawer a map of the town, rather worn and marked all over in coloured pencil.

"You can choose for yourself, where you want to live," he said, flipping his fingernail at the southwestern section, with its famous Tea Hill bordering on the grounds of what had once been a beautiful royal estate. "Or perhaps here," and he indicated the highway running southeast, on either side of which lay the vineyards of a very large state farm and in between them country cottages and small rest homes.

"The houses, as you must know yourself, are all smashed up, and will need rebuilding, and how you're going to manage this I don't know! I can't help. I've nothing to help you with, you see that yourself. . . If I had some workers here—but I haven't a soul, as you can see. It's a hell of a mess."

And thereupon, passing over Voropayev's personal affairs, which he evidently considered a trifling matter, Korytov spoke worriedly of the position in his district, and his thin face with the anxiously suspicious look in his tired eyes became more animated.

He spoke of the things that worried him so much that he had been able to think of nothing else for a very long time. His thoughts centred around insoluble problems of life which he had to solve as best he could in the very near future. The organizations in the centre, without giving him time to extricate

himself from the difficulties he was in, were already piling on fresh affairs, the settling of which depended upon the settlement of older and as yet unsolved problems, and he knew from experience that no further off than today or tomorrow the third, fifth or even eighteenth batch of problems, which depended upon the second, fourth, and seventeenth, would be thrown onto his shoulders, and he understood that he had no right to put them off or set them aside or shift them onto anyone else's shoulders. That was why he was always so irritable, even in his sleep. He was forever telling off or scolding someone in his dreams.

Korytov grew more kindly as he talked, though the things he was talking about were far from heartening; but the whole point was, he assured Voropayev, that there was no other district on the whole Black Sea coast with such remarkable prospects as his, and the obstacles that prevented him from coming to grips with these prospects were, actually, nothing much.

At that moment someone opened the office door without knocking and a small thin woman, wearing a waiter's white linen jacket and soft felt slippers, brought in a tray with a glass of tea and an omelette made of egg powder.

Seeing a stranger in the office, she stood still and looked at him disapprovingly. Voropayev intercepted the disapproving look, and for a second his surprised and her unfriendly glances crossed, causing them both embarrassment. Without pausing in his story, Korytov gestured to her to set down the tray on the end of the desk and held up two fingers to intimate that there would be two for supper.

With a scarcely perceptible movement of the head the woman indicated that there would be no second supper and her stern grey eyes turned towards the corner where the cupboard stood. Korytov, catching her glance, made a movement of assent and again held up two fingers.

He went on with his account of the district and how few people there were while the woman, moving noiselessly, got out an opened bottle of wine, two narrow-waisted glasses such as are used in Iran for tea drinking and in Georgia only for wine, set them on the table and then stood leaning against the wall, waiting for him to finish speaking.

"Once having been conquered by man, nature, you understand, cannot remain without human care," Korytov continued, filling the glasses, cutting the omelette in half with his fork and inviting Voropayev with a gesture to eat and drink. He was probably afraid to stop, in case Voropayev might take it into his head to get up and go.

"A vine is like a cow. It isn't only food a cow wants, she needs care and kindness as well. Stroke her and be kind to her and she'll pay you back in milk. Mind you, vines are just the same. If you don't dig around them in good time, and prune them, and spray them, you won't get a damn thing out of them. Their own mother wouldn't know them and the grapes'll be no bigger than huckleberries. Besides, the only machinery here is—your own hands. Everything here is done by hand, just like in the old days."

Voropayev listened attentively. Several times he was just on the point of bending down to get a tin of meat out of his knapsack but each time Korytov stopped him almost by force.

"A hell of a mess, I'm telling you! There's a shortage of water," he continued untiringly, getting more and more worked up about the local conditions. "Here's yourself, for instance—you've come here to get well, old chap, and all you see is—the outward beauty of the place, the mountains, the flowers, the sea—but these are only like painted lips and eyebrows. If you look into them, they couldn't be worse."

Voropayev cast a quick glance at the woman leaning against the wall. Her pale face, vigorously drawn and with something attractive about it, expressed indifference to Korytov's story. Her grey eyes, under the dark, sharply-outlined brows of the true Cossack woman, were calmly scrutinizing the visitor.

"Now you understand me? Listen—there's no fuel, no transport . . . there used to be over a thousand motorcars in the district, at present there are five 'trophy' cars and no tires. . . And there's no light. I tell you it's a hell of a mess!"

As he sat listening to Korytov, Voropayev gradually realized how foolish, out of place and even insulting must have

been the impression produced on Korytov by the arrival of a Communist concerned with his own personal affairs: true, he had seen service and he had been wounded four times, had only a stump of his left leg, and consumption, but was still capable of doing a great deal, and here he was with his idiotic dream of a quiet life on a farm.

He glanced at Korytov's indignant face to see if he himself was the cause of the secretary's indignation, but could not be sure and so he got up and prepared to go.

Showing no surprise that his guest was leaving and making no attempt to detain him, Korytov shook hands and wound up, still on his own subject.

The woman moved away from the wall and collected on her tray the two wine glasses, the plate that had held the omelette, and the ash tray full of stubs.

All she had gathered from the foregoing conversation had been that the newcomer, though he wore military decorations, was of high rank and a fine-looking man, was going to have a thin time of it here. The greenish-waxy colour of his skin, the blue shadows around his eyes which glittered feverishly as though with constant excitement, showed that he was a sick man, a very sick man indeed. The woman sighed and slipped silently from the room.

"You must give a talk to a Party meeting in two or there days' time," Korytov called after him. "Tell them something about the Cherkassova movement."

"Do you often call meetings?" Voropayev asked before he crossed the threshold.

"No, not so very often. There's no place and no time, and then, as you know, the question of food—it's a hell of a mess! It tells on the people's spirits."

"You can bet your life it does. I feel it myself," Voropayev rejoined.

Korytov spread his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

It was nearly dark in the waiting room, which had evidently been at one time the drawing room of a luxurious mansion. The homemade kerosene lamp smoked with its last feeble efforts.

"You should leave your things here," said a voice in the darkness. "I'll lock them up, no one will touch them."

"Who is that?"

"It's Lena," the voice replied, and Voropayev understood that it was the thin woman who had brought in the supper.

Voropayev left the valise there but took the knapsack which had some provisions in it, and went out.

It was so dark that the houses merged with the gloom. He paused to accustom his eyes to the night. A humid warmth emanated from the earth. Voices reached him from some distance—a party of new settlers must have been coming up from the port—he discerned the measured surge of wavelets against the shore, but from these sounds he could deduce only that the sea was on his left and the voices—that meant the street—were on his right. He could not move because he could not make out where the houses and the pavement were. The radium dial on his wrist watch told him it was about twelve—a good four hours till daybreak. He did not know what to do.

"Have you lost your way?" Lena's white jacket was a vague blur beside him. "Where are you going?"

"I was going to the collective farm." It was the first thing that came into his head. "I daresay I'll find a place to sleep there."

He fancied she shrugged her shoulders, but, of course, he could not make out anything clearly in the dark.

"I'm going in that direction, too. Come along. I'll take you there," she said.

Voropayev moved with greater sureness now beside her jacket that flitted like a white blot. The woman walked so silently in her felt slippers that he hardly heard her at all, only her breathing reminded him that someone was close by.

"Let me take your arm, you're like a ghost," Voropayev suggested, smiling.

"Now, mind, you don't stumble and hurt yourself," she warned in a low tone. "You came back alive from the front but here you can get an injury that'll kill you."

"Well, such things do happen. Let's walk a bit slower, I'm out of breath."

They went along arm in arm, slowly, as though they were out for a stroll,

and climbed the steep street, thickly lined with trees and fragrant as a garden. The dead houses reared silently at either side.

The night was heavy with the smell of damp, burnt wood, and not a movement, not a sound, came to their ears, strained to the utmost in the unnatural stillness.

"There isn't even a dog to be heard," Voropayev whispered. "They've cleared out too."

"Are you going to live here?" Lena asked.

"Looks as though I'll have to."

"With your family, or alone?"

"All my family is a little boy—seven years old. It was for his sake that I went through all this business of coming to the south."

"He's ailing, is he?"

"Yes," he replied reluctantly, feeling that the interest shown by the woman was not sincere, but prompted by a desire to pass the information on to Korytov tomorrow. "Things are pretty bad here. That Korytov of yours . . ." he stood still, coughing. "I can't say I like him."

Shaking his arm, she interrupted him:

"He couldn't put you up at his own place, Colonel, he really couldn't, believe me. He has only one room for himself, his wife and his two little boys, they sleep just anyhow."

"Still, he's the unfeeling sort. Couldn't he have let me sleep in the committee room?"

"No, he really isn't unfeeling at all," the woman contradicted with great conviction, "But how could anyone hope to please you all? You keep coming, more and more of you, and it's give, give, the whole time—one wants a cottage, the other wants a palace, the third—I don't know what. . . But did one of them ever think to ask how we're living? We get our bread rations every third day. As for sugar and butter or fats—I've forgotten what they look like, and we have children, too, you know. . . ."

She ceased speaking suddenly, as though struck by the thought that she might let slip something that a stranger should not be told.

"It's either that Stalin doesn't get the proper reports," she went on after a pause and again he fancied that she shrugged her shoulders, "or—I don't know what to think. Nothing but plans, plans, while we—where are we—the people? They go piling up the plans till they're over our heads."

"You've to thank your Korytov for that. A plan's a good thing in proper hands."

"It's all right for people like you, who haven't any plan: you get yourself a cottage with an orchard, and though it may have only three apple trees in it, still, even those will bring in a thousand or two in the summer. It's easy for you to criticize."

"Do you think I've come here to trade in fruit?"

"That's what they all do."

He made no answer. The woman did not resume the conversation. The street rose steeply above the old gardens where it was broader and a little lighter. Far ahead glimmered the faint light of a campfire.

"So you're a widower," she resumed. "Well, that's soon mended," she said with a touch of irony. "They don't bother nowadays if you're old, they'll have any man."

It touched him to the quick that she applied the epithet old to him with such certainty.

"What about yourself? Are you a widow, or have you never been married?" he asked, ready to retaliate with the first thing that entered his head. He felt a tremor run through the thin hand with its small, rough, swollen fingers.

"I don't know," she said, "whether I'm widowed or deserted. My husband was at Sevastopol. It's three years since I heard a word from him or about him. I wasn't even informed of his death."

They went on for a long time in silence.

"Here's your collective farm. Good luck! I turn off here," he heard her say, and his companion's light arm was removed. The white blur of her jacket swerved to the right and upwards.

"Thank you!"

"Don't mention it. . . ."

The people who had arrived on the evening boat were seated on their bundles, trunks, baskets, or simply on the ground, in the open doorways of the shops, on the sidewalks, in the yards, and in the middle of the street, in the little square in that part of the town's outskirts that for some obscure reason was regarded as the village.

There was something chaotic in the look of this mushroom camp, such as one sees only in a crowd that has foregathered for no definite purpose.

"You'd think they were in encirclement," flashed through Voropayev's mind. "No order anywhere, no discipline."

It was true: the people were not resting or sleeping though it was night, nor were they engaged in anything, but were simply in a state of anxious wakefulness, as they might be on wharves or at a railway station, when, in a fitful doze they wait for the arrival and departure of the steamers and trains, for fear of missing their own. Here, some were heating up their food, others—feeding their weary cattle, a third lot were singing light-heartedly, while the rest huddled together in a crowd, waiting for someone.

Voropayev enquired where the chairman of the collective farm might be found.

Someone pointed out a tall handsome man in an army tunic with an empty left sleeve and the Order of the Red Star and the Sevastopol medal on his breast. He was standing, talking to an old man in a seaman's pea-jacket. They were gesticulating with their lighted lamps and arguing about something. Keeping them in sight, Voropayev sat down by a camp fire.

He was longing to stretch himself out, not simply to lie down, but to stretch out to his full length and fall asleep. But if sleeping was out of the question, he would at least like to have something to eat. A square meal in real army style. Only he felt awkward about undoing his knapsack in front of people. So he lay down by the fire, laid his head on the edge of the knapsack and closed his eyes.

The night was dampish and warm, very still and almost spring-like. The air touched the earth languidly. There was a wonderful smell, southern and soothing, like the chirping of cicadas.

"Wonderful," he thought to himself, beginning to doze but he got a grip on himself and sat up, looking around for the chairman of the collective farm who was no longer in sight.

The crowd had swept to one side, those who had been sitting around the campfire got up, too, and followed the rest, leaving an iron pot full of potatoes.

He wanted to get up but had no strength. And why should he? He could be sure of his night's rest by the fire. Slipping a hand inside his belt, he carefully unfastened the strap of his artificial limb and, holding his breath, straining and wincing, rubbed the numb stump, and felt he would fall asleep at once.

And he really did, he slept that wonderful light sleep that children enjoy when they can still hear through their sleep the talk of those around them. Strange as it may seem, Voropayev heard even though he was snoring a loud conversation about empty houses and their immediate occupation.

"I ought to get up," he thought. But he could not.

"Three rooms, a sort of verandah and a shed, all safe and sound!" shouted a loud and masterful voice.

A second later a husky voice which, as he afterwards guessed, belonged to the handsome fellow with the Red Star, who was Nikolai Stoiko, the chairman of the collective farm, called out:

"Sidorenko! Stepanych!"

"Here, Mikola Petrovich."

"This is to be your house... Good luck to you in it!"

"Lord Jesus Christ... May the prophecy be fulfilled. We can go in, can't we? Here, Garpina ... and the lads! Come in, thank the Lord! Let me go in first."

Voropayev listened, smiling and licking away the salt tears that kept trickling into his mouth.

A sweet and splendid event was taking place somewhere close at hand, under cover of night, among the flashing, darting lights of hurricane lamps, the smoke of campfires, the chaos of this weary encampment.

He did not see—hardly anyone saw—the elderly Cossack farmer who had arrived on the same boat with his daughter-in-law and grandchildren, enter the little whitewashed mud cabin, half-buried in the depths of the green orchard, enter stumbling, with the photograph of his son in his hands, set it on the windowsill and bow low to the walls of his new home.

"Within these walls may we live, may we work well, you're for us, and we're for you . . ." he whispered, as though casting a spell over the place. "God send us peace and happiness. Garpina, wash the floor."

At that moment another offer, poignantly pleasant, rang out in the darkness:

"Five rooms, a verandah, as you might call it, at either side of the house, and fifteen fruit trees in the orchard."

Silence. A cough. Then a husky summons:

"Khvatov! Tvorozhenkov!"

Two voices, tumbling over each other in their haste to answer:

"Here! Here!"

"Are you agreeable to share a house? One family will face this way, the other that way. . . It's a good house, two stoves, and in a convenient location, right in the centre. Well, what about it?"

"What do you think, Petro, we ain't likely to murder each other, what?"

"Hardly. You take the left half, then. . . Pity there are fifteen trees, if we could have had eight apiece, it would have been better. . . Whose side of the house is the pump on?"

"Mine."

"Damn it! Then if that's the case, let's draw lots. . . ."

By every fire, the darkness carried on its own whispered conversation without hindering the general talk.

"The soil here is that rich—you go to bed at night, the garden's empty, you get up in the morning—everything's ripe."

"You're just about ripe yourself, with all the drink in you. Sleep it off."

"Where does all this vitality come from?" Voropayev pondered. "And this inexhaustible naivété of the soul, this readiness to face anything, this love for everything new, even when it is hard come by. Where do we get so much restless energy? How did we get it all? And how did we manage to keep it all? And how good it all is. . ." At last he fell sound asleep.

After she had taken Voropayev as far as the square, Lena climbed the stair-like street up to the top of the hill that sheltered the town. Making no sound, she opened an almost unnoticeable door in a small, half-ruined house. She entered as lightly as a waft of air, but her mother, who had fallen asleep long since by the side of her six-year-old granddaughter, knew at once that someone had come in and asked in alarm:

"Is that you, Lenochka?"

"Yes," she replied, not troubling to lower her voice. "Is the lamp on the table?"

"Yes, on the left-hand side. How late you are this evening, was there a meeting?"

"No, I was showing a disabled man the way to the collective farm," Lena explained, lighting the small wick in the kerosene lamp. She gave a brief account of Voropayev, his talk with Korytov, and of the people who had been to the district committee office that day, and how things had turned out for them, winding up with information about the food that was to be given in a few days' time on ration points, due to them from the month before last.

The surprising thing was that her description of the Voropayev incident made the strongest impression on her mother, who asked questions about him and whether he was old or young, what he looked like, then for a long time lay sighing and grumbling in a whisper:

"Now they'll all come down on us—with medals, and crutches, and what not. . . Lord, oh lord!"

Meanwhile Lena sat down and began to mend stockings. When she had finished them, she got her little girl's jersey out of the trunk where she had hidden it that morning so that her mother would not strain her eyes darning it. As she worked, she put in a word now and again.

"Now they'll be coming here in hundreds," the old woman grumbled. "Disabled, wounded, shell shocked. They'll have to be served first everywhere, they can't be refused anything. . . Then they'll get all the houses. . . ."

"Yes, that goes without saying," Lena agreed indifferently.

"Well, you know—listen, you ought to ask Korytov to register the house in your name," the mother pleaded. "Someone who's lost a limb like that fellow you're talking about will come along and put you out of here, don't think

he won't. And then you won't know where to turn."

"No, he won't put us out," Lena contradicted. "And if he does, we'll get some other house to live in."

"What do we want with any other?" the mother objected stubbornly. "You won't find an orchard like this every day, my dear—twenty-three trees and each is better than the others. And as for the house needing repairs, that doesn't matter so much—we can wait a year or two. . . Tell Korytov—don't be shy."

"Oh, all right, I'll tell him," Lena said. "You ought to try and get some sleep now, Mother, because you have to get up early to go and stand in a queue and you won't have a proper rest."

It was almost getting light when she laid aside her daughter Tanya's jersey and began to undress, examining each garment carefully as she took it off. Wherever she found a loose button, a hole or any other sign of wear and tear, she put in a few stitches, and with the threaded needle between her teeth, went on with her undressing.

After she had mended her knickers and chemise—the latter being darned for the third time—she stuck the needle into the wallpaper, blew out the light and, wrapping herself in the blanket, lay down to sleep on the trunk.

Just as she had settled down and was drawing deep, snuffling breaths, the old woman got up. She was heavy in her movements, whispering to herself and rustling somewhat like a fussy mouse. She tucked the bedclothes round her grandchild and then, taking the oil-cloth shopping bag and two glass jam jars with her, she sallied out, and there yawned so noisily that Lena and Tanechka awoke and listened for a second, wondering what next.

That night was no night at all. The settlers never slept a wink. They had arrived at the threshold of a new life. Those who had already been given a place to live, fed and looked after their cattle, and put the yards in order; those who had no new homes yet hung about the chairman of the collective farm. The housewives sat down on the sidewalk, forming a queue outside the village store which was still closed, telling each other about their journey. The children kept the fires going.

Voropayev was asleep beside the last of these fires where he had settled down for the night. Lena's mother saw him on her way to the store and recognized him at once from her daughter's description.

The first rays of the sun were flitting over Voropayev's face and he dreamt that he was falling asleep to the purring of kittens. He was reluctant to wake and find he was mistaken. Then someone shook him roughly.

A strange old woman was standing by him.

"You'll miss your breakfast, commander," she said severely. "They only serve it till nine. And Korytov himself is here."

He could not understand who the old woman could be but he guessed she was talking about the dining room at the district committee office.

Hastily adjusting his artificial limb and shouldering his knapsack, he got to his feet lightly enough, in full view of all the women and children, as though he was only twenty and it was not he who had once gone to Kislovodsk to take the cure for heart disease, not he who had lain tossing in Astrakhan, suffering from typhoid fever, during Kirov's time, not he who had stormed Jassy, not he who had been laid low by consumption.

Lately he seemed to have less of everything except years, but just now he did not feel their mocking burden. Neither did the weight of his former misfortunes, that had retreated into the region of reminiscences, disturb him at this early hour of kindly warmth, among strangers who were also setting out on a new life.

About the same moment he noticed Korytov, who was telling the newcomers about local prospects. The secretary's face expressed no particular pleasure when Voropayev drew near and, suppressing his cough with difficulty, stood listening to him. When Korytov had finished on the subject of prospects, he went on to speak of practical possibilities, but suddenly remembering something, paused and with a half glance at Voropayev said in a voice that was irritated rather than considerate:

"Why not take the job of bookkeeper

with them, Colonel? They'll find a room for you right away, and if you settle down and raise a family, they'll build you a house in the course of time."

The collective farmers turned to look at Voropayev.

The tall, fine-looking fellow, called Stoiko, with the empty left sleeve, stood at attention from habit.

"We won't let you down, Colonel," he said with a touch of reserve but very firmly and sincerely.

"I'll wait a bit and look around first," Voropayev replied without going into explanations. "What's the latest radio communiqué?" he asked.

No one answered.

Korytov made no attempt to persuade him but passed calmly over to the subject of local possibilities, and, judging by the thoroughness with which he went into every particular, had no intention of finishing soon.

But the question Voropayev had asked about the communiqué had excited the audience. People whispered to each other and no longer listened very attentively to Korytov.

"He's beginning at the wrong end," Voropayev said to himself. "The latest communiqué, the orders of the Supreme Commander, what's happening at the front—these are the most important things now."

He himself couldn't quite tell why he set out for the hills; it must have been because he wanted to be alone with his thoughts.

The mists of night were drying in the sun which spread over them like wet flax on the southern slopes. There were mists and fogs of all kinds and colours; some were strong and thick as felt, others—thin and transparent like strands of thread, some were like wounded white geese. The moist feathery down of the fluffy clouds, torn to shreds by a wind high over the hills, floated in the air, dividing sea from sky by a living curtain. The violet-blue sea reminded one of a carelessly-lacquered tray with an uneven, rippled surface. Something—it might have been a ship, or a clot of shadow—stood up on it.

The flooding breath of pungent evergreens, the languorous, honey-sweet streams of bream and wormwood, the rivulets of cool fragrant mint and clover, raced down towards him, frolicking in the morning sunshine. And though the season of the year precluded the possibility of grasses and herbs blooming—they were in the air—unmistakeably. It might be only a memory but what of that! The scents were there.

Because of them Voropayev strode along, hardly noticing the climb. The town was left far behind. He sat down to breakfast in the ruins of a brick house, surrounded by the remains of a garden that had survived in patches, among crooked wistarias that resembled dried snakes. He had not had a meal since noon of the previous day. He still had some of the bread he had brought with him from Moscow; the Portuguese sardines and the Finnish knife with a haft made from the leg of a wild rock buck were war trophies.

The town was visible from end to end; on either side the shore, illumined now by the edge of the sun, was revealed for a good ten kilometres. The mountains remained in shadow, as though the sun did not cling to them or skirted them somehow.

"Surely there must be some little house with three rooms in it here?"

In pre-war days sanatoria had crowned the hills between the town and the mountain range; now they lay in ruins, but here and there the cottages which had been occupied by the doctors and nurses were still standing. The trouble was that there was no electric light, no fuel to heat them with, and they were a long way from the town.

Having nothing better to do, he sat scrutinizing the walls that had accidentally afforded him shelter.

In the past, the house must have had four rooms and a kitchen ("just what I need!") with a back and front garden ("and a good garden at that—let me see . . . one, two, three—twenty-six trees altogether"). There was a tap in the middle of the yard, just by the balcony, and some loose ends of wires were wound around the posts—so there must have been electricity, too. A graded road led uphill, almost touching the grounds. ("An excellent spot! Wood could be delivered to the gate!") Voropayev turned on his stone seat to get a better view of the remains of the building. Roof there was none, window frames, doors and floors were gone, too. All that would burn had been burned, and what

was left was worthless. But the site, roughly triangular in form, was first rate. The fragments of a low wall surrounding it ran along its sinuous boundary line. On the left lay a deep gully ("If a small dam were built, the place would have its own water.") To the right, in front of the house lay the vineyards, to the left—the slate hills.

Voropayev did sums on the ground with a twig and calculated how many bricks would be needed to rebuild the house.

There was no earthly use in even dreaming of it, although he knew he would never find a better site than this—that is, if it was unoccupied. Judging by the look of things, the owner must have shared the fate of his home.

Yes, it was a nice little place, there was no doubt about it. The trouble was that, nice as it might be, his find was quite useless. A man on his own would never, under any conditions manage to rebuild it up again and restore it.

Voropayev turned his gaze towards the collective farm with its houses, orchards and vineyards. He had a good view of them from his position.

Before the war two rows of private houses had stretched westward from the collective farm, along the steep banks of the mountain river.

A few poplars, ruffled and plucked like young fighting cocks, and an iron fence around the burned-down houses showed where their gardens had once been. The war had devoured the big, well-built houses and left standing only the most wretched, which were outliving their time, as though to indicate that from now on people would have to be satisfied with very little.

"When all's said and done, I'll have to decide on something." And Voropayev's thoughts involuntarily returned to the house on the threshold of which he was seated.

As a matter of fact, a better house than this would be hard to find. He could probably get it repaired on credit. He sat trying to picture what life would be like here. He imagined bringing home his thin little son, a flaxen-haired northerner, and how he would arrange his books—they, damn it all, must be getting mildewy in the packing cases since the winter of 1939! — and how he and his boy would walk down to the seashore from here . . . he smiled as he saw himself in a summer suit, with a fishing rod in his hand. Of course, he wasn't intending to settle down here as a veteran on pension, retired from the world, but still a homeless man needed a roof over his head, first of all. Then suddenly a trifling thought occurred to him and overtook all the main ideas that had occupied his mind just now. It was the thought of milk.

"It would be a good thing to get goat's milk to drink early in the morning. It shouldn't be very hard to arrange," came the next thought. "But where would it be brought from?" he asked himself. "And who would bring it?" He tried to estimate the distance from here to the nearest collective farm shed, it looked to be about two kilometres. The discovery revealed a gulf down which all his plans were ruined and fell to pieces. Besides, apart from milk, how was Serezha to go all that way to school? It wouldn't be in summer ei her, but in the windy winter months. And who was going to cook their meals—the communal dining room wouldn't solve the problem, it wouldn't be enough, and where the devil was it anyway? Somewhere down by the shore, very likely. Then what was he going to heat the house with? Who would manage all that side of the housekeeping?

It became suddenly clear to him that a war veteran with one leg would hardly be able to run a household and that this house was not for him.

"And supposing she came here to live with me?"

As soon as he pictured to himself the light, brisk figure of Alexandra Ivanovna Goreva in her starched white doctor's smock, amid the chaos of this neglected, out-of-the-way place, and imagined her chopping wood or carrying water, he realized that, even with her, life in this mountain eyrie would be unthinkable and impracticable.

Yes, and even if Serezha's mother, Varya—she who had been able to do everything and had done everything—could have risen from the grave, she could not have made anything out of this, because Varya, though nearer to earth than Alexandra Ivanovna, still had no faculty for living far from what was called, for some reason, civilization and seemed to consist mainly in indoor

lavatory, electric light, central heating and a geyser in the bathroom.

It is no easy matter for a war veteran of forty-three who has lost so much of his strength in the fighting to begin life anew among the ruins of someone else's home.

Voropayev rummaged in his knapsack, got out a flask and took a mouthful or two of vodka.

No, it would be no kind of life up here. How could he ask a young town-bred woman to live in this godforsaken spot and keep chickens and go fishing!.. Sheer nonsense, of course.

But what could he do when he had dreamed all his life of living by the sea and had imagined such a life to be the peak of human happiness. And then to feel that this dream had led him here to shame and disgrace. . . .

A Siberian by birth, Voropayev had seen the sea for the first time when he was grown up and went to Astrakhan. It had fascinated him at once as a living thing with which he could link up his life forever. Life followed other paths, however. Komsomol years were spent in the Astrakhan steppes. Then, when he had become a member of the Communist Party and an army officer, he guarded the frontier on the Amur and helped to build Komsomolsk. The army was his home for the better half of his life, the regiments, divisions and corps were for him those villages and towns with which he associated changes of climate, landscape and conditions of living.

If he wanted to describe the Pamirs or the Kulunda plains, he had first to recall on what page of regimental history they occurred.

Hassan, Khalkin Gol, Northern Finland, were remembered more by the names of comrades and military operations than by the life he led there. The sea alone caressed his imagination with a feeling of tranquillity and happiness that had always been somewhat lacking in his restless nature. And now here was the sea at last, yet it appeared that it might as well have not been here. Voropayev was floundering like a sinking ship.

"Well, never mind, let's get busy with something else," he said as he rose to his feet.

A few hours later he dropped into Korytov's office. Korytov was thoughtfully studying the map of the U.S.S.R. and marking the front line.

"Found anything to suit you?" he asked in an indifferent tone and, without waiting for an answer, which seemed in keeping with his nature, he went on: "Pity you didn't take that job as bookkeeper. That collective farm is going to make millions, old man. In two years' time they'd have built such a house for you — oh! you don't know the half of it! Heard the communiqué?"

Voropayev neither interrupted nor assented to his remarks, trying to emphasize in this way his perfect indifference to the problem of living quarters.

"The fact that I haven't heard it yet is bad enough. But that your local people haven't heard it yet—that's a downright shame," he replied harshly.

"What people are you talking about?" Korytov asked vaguely as he searched the map for something he could not locate. "Maybe one or two haven't heard it, and there you go talking about 'the local people.' How do you like this champion of the people! Is the Oder a pretty decent-sized river? I can't seem to find it. Individuals don't interest me," Korytov declared, leaving the map and advancing on Voropayev with the evident intention of engaging him in a wordy battle and winning it. "I'm interested in people as a whole. I'm fond of generalizing or synthesizing. Thoughts that are yours alone don't interest me."

"You'll carry this generalizing of yours to the point where you'll start regarding yourself as a mass. What do you mean by saying that the individual doesn't interest you? In that case, then, you can't be interested in Stakhanov. because, though there are many Stakhanovites, there is only one Stakhanov."

"Now, easy, easy—this isn't a debating society. Don't let yourself go."

"I can see your point of view. You say to yourself—there are thousands like Voropayev and therefore he, Voropayev, can't possibly interest me because of his one-thousandth fraction value. You take people wholesale and you think there's no sense in getting to know them individually. But this is stupid, Korytov, and it doesn't even smell of Marxism."

He wanted to go on, but Korytov interrupted him coldly with:

"We'll talk about that another time. Tell me what you've come for."

"I've come to start work here as a propagandist," Voropayev said, smiling because he saw plainly that Korytov only half believed him and yet was glad at the same time. "Yes, I have, honestly."

Frowning to give a more significant expression to his face, Korytov sat down in his armchair.

"I was sure you'd come," he said, clearing the air with a gesture. "I was prepared to bet it would turn out that way. Well, I'm very glad. It's not for old Party workers like you and me to live in country cottages, that's not our profession. Let other people live there," then, noticing disagreement in Voropayev's expression, he exclaimed in sincere astonishment: "What do you want a country cottage for? You'd do better to take some decent rooms down near the sea front. Yes, you've done right and honestly. Well now, let's settle the matter. What do you want to be? A propagandist, an instructor? I agree to anything. And you were talking about taking a house! You, a colonel, chief of a corps political department, six decorations, author of books."

Korytov ran over Voropayev's qualifications, as stated in the questionnaire, without a mistake, and the colonel had to admit that he had an excellent memory.

"And look at the experience you have in Party mass work, damn it!" Korytov said, still in the same loud tone.

"Don't bother persuading me, I told you I want to work in the district committee. But first of all, give me some place to live—it's the only condition I make."

"Lena, Lenochka!" Korytov called excitedly, nodding at the same time to show that he agreed with Voropayev.

"Is she the manager here or what?"

Lena entered noiselessly.

"They've all cleared out and she and I are the only ones left. Have you the keys of the dormitories, Lena? Fix up a cot there for Comrade Voropayev."

"Just a minute! What do you mean—a cot? Nonsense! Let me have those decent rooms you were talking about, down on the sea front. I've got to bring my little boy — you ought to understand that! And I'm a very sick man."

"All in good time," Korytov rejoined. "I can tell you of a flat right away: It's No. 8, in Primorskaya Street. I'm giving up my own to you, see? Take it. You won't find a better one in the town. But still, I think you'll have to go to the dormitory for the time being, see? There isn't a pane of glass in the windows of the flat, nor a window frame, and the stove is all smashed up. See? Where should we put him?" he asked Lena. "Who's next to you?"

"Miroshin."

"Ah, yes. That's fine. Then let him have Miroshin's room. Have you got the keys? He'll only be there two or three days, until we can fix things up for him." He turned to Voropayev. "I'll give you tomorrow to settle in, and the day after you'll go to the collective farms. You'll have three farms, you stay about a week in them, talk to the people and help them. I'll talk to the Regional Committee about you myself."

"Where am I to live when I come back?"

"Lena will put you up somewhere. We all live like that, in a whirl, as if we were on the roundabouts. All right, Lena, you may go."

They were left alone.

"It was easier for you at the front, I daresay. You with your aides-de-camps, automobiles, telephones and all the rest of it. You had only to give the order and it was done. Wasn't that the way? But here, on the home front, in places that have been smashed up—it's a real tragedy. I'm sending you twenty-five kilometres away, and I've no car to give you, there's no telephone, and the post goes—on foot—only twice a week. You understand what that means?"

Korytov's face wore an expression of suffering, he was almost boasting of all the difficulties he could not cope with.

"Does everybody here take the same view of things as you do?" Voropayev asked ironically. "What's the idea of persuading yourself that failures are inevitable? Get hold of some people, pick out the best and let them help you."

"That's it!—that's the very thing I wanted to talk to you about. I want you, my friend, to organize a Cherkassova

movement in our district. Then we'll give you a palace to live in, I swear it," said Korytov, waving his hand in jocular expansiveness.

"Look here, you can't tell me anything new about the Cherkassova movement. I know Cherkassova herself, I've had some good talks with her and I found out how and where she first got the idea of this movement. You remember where she started it—in Sergeant Pavlov's house, a house that's a legend now in Stalingrad. And do you know why? Because, to tell the truth, she was afraid that new people would come pouring in and in the hurry and scurry the famous house would be overlooked and fall to ruins and a great exploit would be forgotten. All she was thinking of was saving the house . . . in the name of the people . . . and not of rebuilding the whole town. And she did get the house rebuilt, but meanwhile her initiative was taken up by the press, the public, the Party, and was generalized, as you're fond of putting it. . . ."

"There you are, you see! It was generalized, after all!" Korytov managed to put in.

". . . And, raised to a tremendous pitch, it became a movement because thousands, tens of thousands of people joined it, first and foremost Cherkassova herself. She proved to be worthy of this great height and stayed on it."

"That's the stuff! Put yourself in Cherkassova's place, try and generalize her experience and way of doing things. I'm telling you that's what we want. Don't you see that? You've got to infect them with your enthusiasm—you're the fiery and enthusiastic type!"

They were both talking at once but, curiously enough, each could hear and understand what the other was saying, and so they managed to express their thoughts and answer each other notwithstanding the fact that their voices were raised. Lena, who entered the office while they were at it and paused to listen with curiosity, could make nothing of it all for some time. Only one thing was clear: that this one-legged colonel with all his ailings and misfortunes was going to cause them all—and Korytov in the first place—a good deal of trouble, and it would not be surprising if he got the better of Korytov, for she saw with the inexplicably unerring gift of women that Voropayev was the stronger of the two.

"Infect them with enthusiasm, eh? Ha-ha! That's good!" They were shouting. "Do you know the first thing about it?—what it all starts with? In Stalingrad every stone is stained with blood, every ruin is a mausoleum of heroism. What's your district compared to that? What did your district do during the occupation? How did it fight? Where's its strength and glory, and what do they lie in exactly? Can you say?"

"That's exactly the question I want you to study, generalize and analyze as it should be done, and present the whole thing to the bureau of the Party district committee in the form of practical propositions. . . But my personal opinion is that you should start by setting them an example, infect them, Colonel, and lead them as if you were leading them in battle. 'Forward! Follow me!' That's the way!"

"Infect them! What do you think you're talking about? Why didn't you do it yourself? What were you waiting for? And here are your people infected with mistrust, oppressed with difficulties, while you heap plan after plan on their shoulders, plan after plan, and stick your silly damned bits of paper under their noses. . . ."

"You've got a nerve, damn your impudence! The war's spoilt you! You've just gone to the dogs! What sort of a Communist are you if you've forgotten how to do rough work? All you want to do is give orders and write leaflets!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Look here, my lad, you're the kind that runs behind the people and keeps shouting: 'I'm giving you first-rate leadership, see!' Why, the people move mountains without your help and if they had the proper leadership, the sort Stalin teaches us they should have, why they'd pour the ocean from one place to another."

"Wait, you listen first, and understand one thing: people can only be infected by deeds, not words. So what you've got to do is organize them. Pick your people, give them the right idea of what they have to do and how to do it, rouse them to it—then you'll get

the whole thing going... Heroism isn't spontaneous, it is a matter of organization. Heroes need midwives, if you want to know."

"That's right."

"What's right?"

"It's right—what I've been telling you."

"You mean, I've been telling you, only you keep raising objections."

"I'm raising objections?"

They ceased speaking for a moment, unable to grasp which of them had been the first to say "that's right!" and, panting a little, stared at each other in annoyance.

"But on the whole, you understood what it was I wanted to say?" Korytov said, jerking a folder of papers towards him on the desk.

"Heroism is organization, and not spontaneity."

"Quite right," Voropayev agreed, still under the impression that he had the last word. "I've always held this opinion."

"What are we arguing about, then?"

"I don't know."

"So it turns out we aren't arguing, but we've come to an agreement, eh?"

"Looks like it."

"It's an awful business! Chewing the fat for forty-five minutes by the clock. Lena! I say, Lena, have we anything that would do for provisions on the road?" Korytov asked quietly, anxious to avoid another argument.

Relaxing her folded arms, Lena leaned over to the cupboard and got out a bottle of red wine.

"I'll bring you the rations afterwards," she said indifferently. "You'll be starting off from our place, won't you?—up there where I live?" she explained to Voropayev.

"This wine is from the *Victory* state farm, five years old, mark you," Korytov said, pointing to the bottle. "You must go and see the place without fail. The director is Fyodor Ivanovich Chumandrin, and the vintner is a splendid old fellow, Sergei Constantinovich Shirokogorov. You ought to give a lecture there and have a talk with them, they live like bears in a den, never see a new face for months on end. Here, look—I jotted down a thing or two for you," and he handed to the astonished Voropayev a sheet of paper which was headed, in an angular laboured writing: "Plan of Voropayev's lectures," followed by six subjects.

"When did you find time to do this?"

"When you went off to look for a palace for yourself I did some thinking for you," and Korytov chuckled to himself, scratched the side of his head and winked.

Plunged in low black clouds, the far hills soared into the sky. The sea turned black and glossy like pitch. In the empty houses the black air of night quivered and howled. The northeast wind was rising. It had turned suddenly cold.

Lena's mother was straightening the mattress and putting clean sheets and pillow slips out of her own stock of linen on the tumbled bed that Miroshin had not occupied for the last fortnight. Voropayev, who was to sleep in it, was nailing a piece of plywood over the unglassed window. He held the nails in his mouth.

"This is no way to live," the old woman was saying. "Don't you listen to Korytov, he'll only muddle you up with his talk, you ought to demand a whole house for yourself. They wouldn't give it to Lenochka and me but they've got to give it to you. There was an order signed by Stalin about it. Only you have to insist on it. Where do you think you're going to live with your little child? Now, don't miss the chance, strike while the iron's hot and keep at him. I could look after the little boy at a pinch—that is, if you haven't anyone else, I have my own granddaughter on my hands anyway. I could cook for you, too. Listen to me, I'm an old woman, insist on a house for yourself."

"Well and then what?"

"I'm giving you good advice. Ask for this house, for instance. It is nobody's. I never said anything, but I may as well tell you: the people who lived in it ran away with the Germans."

"Well?"

"There are four rooms, two smashed by a bomb, they need some repairs. Miroshin is a bachelor, they can give him a room somewhere in town and he'll be only too glad to take it. The house has a good garden and there's a place to keep a cow and chickens."

"And what sort of a view is there from here?"

"You mean the sea?" she asked, not

understanding for a moment. "Oh, yes, of course, you can see that from end to end."

"Then what's the trouble? Take it."

"The trouble is, my dear, that they won't give it to us, they refused. It's all the same to Miroshin, he's got no family and so he won't put in a word for us, and if someone a bit more pushing comes along, we'll be thrown out. I'm telling you, I know that for sure. You should see it in the morning, it's such a lovely spot! As good as a sanatorium."

"I remember, I saw it in the daytime."

He remembered the look of it, the deserted dirty lot, with traces of a one-time vegetable garden, where a dozen cherry and apricot trees had been planted haphazardly. The roughly-built stone wall around it now lay in ruins; a German trench zigzagged sharply across the yard. A pile of rubbish marked the spot where the shed had stood. It was not to be compared, of course, with the inspiring site he had found that morning, but still, he might live quite decently here if he were alone. What was he looking for? A home, a place to live in for the rest of his life? It had just occurred to him that he was seeking not so much a dwelling to live in but people to live with. The point was not that he had nowhere to live but that he could not live alone.

"All right, I'll take the house, if you like," he said at last. "For myself and you. Two rooms for you and Lena, two for me. Choose which you like. But do you think we'll be able to repair it?"

"Good heavens, what a thing to worry about? Of course we will!" the old woman mumbled, touching his shoulder with her dark hands. "D'you call those repairs?" And, pointing to walls and ceiling, she reeled off like a well-memorized lesson some very exact figures about materials. It turned out that they were all to be had, and could be obtained without any great difficulty, and that in general there was nothing much to repair.

"She clings to people, too, and finds it hard to go on alone," flashed through Voropayev's mind while he listened to her rapid undertone.

"Bring your little boy here," she said, "and I'll look after him, and wash for you, how could you manage all that yourself? He'll be looked after as if he was my own. Just run over this," and she thrust into his hand a slip of paper with figures on it. "This is the rent and the insurance, and that's how much you'd have to pay a gardener to lay out the garden, and here I noted down about having a dozen or so of vines planted. See, how cosy it could be made?" ("She sees it already, she feels it, she imagines herself living there," he thought.) "You'll thank me for it, I'm sure, if you take my advice," she said, peering anxiously into his face, pleading with him to agree.

Voropayev himself was beginning to see—the old woman had infected him with her own enthusiasm!—the vines creeping over the white-walled cottage, the garden in bloom, bees humming under the open windows.

"But maybe we ought to look for something higher up, in the hills?"

"No, no, no—that'd be much too far. A deserted spot. You'd get nothing out of that but disappointment and irritation."

The old woman was afraid of searching. She had grown used to her room as one gets used to a dream, and the room was growing into a house. Here, only here!—her worn hands pleaded. Here, where the hearth had been lit and warmed, where she had neighbours beside her, and the washing hung out on the lines, and the little granddaughter ran about. And he—what had he been dreaming of? Was it not of a roof over his head, a place where he might gradually recover his health? Was it a beautiful house that was so important for him? He wasn't going to bury himself here for the rest of his life, was he? Although—who knew what life had in store?

"Then I'll write out an application for the house and you'll hand it in. If you don't object, I'd like the two upstairs rooms," he said, deciding the fate of the house.

"You shall have the upstairs, of course, you needn't worry about that. I was thinking myself you'd be better upstairs. . . ."

"I'm going away this evening, though."

"And aren't you going to stay the night?"

"No. I'm starting for the collective farms and when I come back, then we'll get down to business with this house at once."

Towards evening it was blowing hard. The nor'easter was stiffening hourly, the sea was pale, the tide surged and beat with a hollow roar against the stone quayside, the streets were deserted. But Voropayev was not in the least worried about the weather. After some motioning to passing cars he was picked up by an empty lorry going in his direction. There was something bracing, some battling quality in this weather; it distracted him from doleful thoughts and aroused in him the same nervous tension of struggle that he used to feel before a decisive attack, when he wanted everything to be as hard and as bad as possible at the beginning so that later, when strength was on the ebb, it would get better and easier.

And, as soon as the thought of the attack came, he recalled his friends at the front. Where were they now? On the 29th of last month, to judge by the Supreme Commander's order of the day, the troops of the Third Ukrainian—his own front—had broken through the enemy's defences somewhere on the west bank of the Danube. Among those mentioned Voropayev had seen the name of the commander of the Fourth Guards Army. It followed, then, that his own corps was fighting for the Danube crossing, and very likely was among the first to force the defences. Consequently, Goreva must be there with her hospital. He had a very clear picture of what must have taken place. He knew those parts well on the map and somehow almost instinctively realized what the place would be like. How often had he explored the Danube valley in his imagination, like a novelist who intends to people with his heroes a chosen place, depicted with perfect faithfulness to life.

He knew the Danube well and now saw as clearly in his mind's eye as in reality how the whole front was fighting and how the Fourth Guards were fighting, saw and heard what each of the men he knew so well was doing and saying there.

The army commander's face was fresh and ruddy like a true soldier's, a mixture of straightforwardness, severity and modesty.

Voropayev could see him knitting his fair eyebrows and tapping the map with his pencil, as he listened, while the corps commander who spoke in a high-pitched voice and smiled no matter what he was reporting informed him of the breakthrough that had been accomplished.

The chief of staff was plain, too, to Voropayev's eyes, stretching his gigantic length over the map, with the telephone held to his left ear in a hand white with tension.

If an artist were to paint his portrait, this particular pose ought to be chosen as the most characteristic of him at any hour of his days and nights at the front. He breakfasted and read the paper while his left hand was being massaged.

Voropayev saw, too, the general who had risen from the ranks; formerly a professor, he had joined up at the outbreak of the war, ultimately to become a member of the military council; this was a man the whole army loved.

"And Nikita Alexeyevich will be to the fore, as usual," Voropayev was thinking of the corps commander whose political assistant he had been—and his heart contracted with envy to those who were still out there and with pity for himself.

How busy and tense things must be now where Rayevsky was! Very likely, he hadn't been to bed for three days, and was hoarse, but as cheery as ever, "sticking around" one of the divisional commanders, or perhaps the regimental commanders, telling yarns that were known in the companies in an hour's time, and jotting down his observations and impressions for the evening order which was to be full of the severest possible criticism.

Or perhaps—as it was at Jassy—at the critical moment in a tremendous and as yet indeterminate operation, he might say to one of the divisional commanders:

"Well now, my dear Anton Stepanych, you lead the regiment and I'll take your division, for old times' sake, and let's make it hot for those devils. . . ."

And with this division he would make the first dent in the enemy's defences.

Voropayev's eyes were full of tears.

"It'll never come back to me now—the old life, and I'll never see any of them again!" He sighed bitterly and stared at the road to rid himself of his visions, but they were too strong and persistent.

Creaking and rocking violently, the

lorry drove along the tortuous highway. Voropayev was jogged and tossed in the empty lightweight lorry and what between this, the coughing and, perhaps, the hunger, he felt rather sick. It was quite dark now. The mountains seemed to be descending, the clouds were piling up over them, and the sea slipped over the lower edge of the sky, flecked by the first, still faintly-shining stars.

A whistling and howling filled the air, yet the air was sweet with the sweetness of brisk sea winds. The damp hands were sticky with this sweetness. It was like the ethereal nectar of flowers, cooled by the wind. It was like a memory of long-past youth.

"And Shura Goreva, in her stiff-starched, rustling, but already blood-spattered doctor's smock, will be somewhere with the regiment, the battalion, at some terrific river crossing where, of course, she would have gone with her medical service group to help the ambulance people and she is probably 'carving' or 'darning' people while the row and the bombing is going on."

He had a fleeting vision, as in a lightning flash, of his first meeting with Goreva, an amazing meeting, rare with an original beauty possible only at the front.

It was... Yes, where was it exactly?.. It was in the spring ... the spring in the Ukraine, somewhere in the lower reaches of the Dnieper. He had been returning to his division after his third wound, and a traffic block at the pontoons had delayed him in a riverside village.

The Germans gave the crossing no peace. Every now and then it would be thrown out of commission; while it was being set up after the last raid, Voropayev alighted from his jeep and, breaking up the transport column, directed the cars and drays to scatter among the yards and gardens.

Suddenly he heard the warning hissing of a bomb, almost beside him, it seemed. He had hardly time to hug the ground when the explosion was heard, not beside him, it was true, but still pretty close, and something crashed to the ground. He raised his head and—such things happen once in lifetime, very likely, or perhaps once even in a dream—saw the clay wall of a house sink slowly to the ground right before his eyes on the opposite side of the street. Then it had crumbled, sending up a cloud of dust and exposing the interior of a room. Someone in white overall stooped quickly and spread shielding arms over something lying before him, embracing and protecting it from flying fragments. The wounded, many of whom were lying and sitting by the house, cheered as soon as the first stunned moment had passed.

"Good for you, doctor! Bravo! Bravo!" rang out on every side, and Voropayev who was just coming round, only now made out the figure of a young woman, flushed and agitated, standing by the operating table in the room exposed by the fallen wall. She had been operating on a patient and had bent over him at the moment of the explosion to shield him with her body, not knowing that the wall behind her had crumbled to the ground and the whole street could see her.

Only for a moment did she turn towards the street, then she bent over the wounded man again to finish her operation. She was assisted in her work by two girls, and when everything had passed off successfully, they carried the patient somewhere into the house, and a soldier, with a roughly-bandaged leg, leaning on a stick, limped into the room, which, with its missing wall, resembled a stage in an open-air theatre.

The street was still eagerly discussing the occurrence when Voropayev entered the house and resolutely demanded the immediate transference of the operating room to some other place.

"You see what's going on?" the woman said wearily. "So many wounded! What am I to do with them?"

She would probably have gone on with her operations and dressings here had it not been for Voropayev, who appealed to the wounded men to help, and got the doctor and her instruments moved at once to another house about two blocks away.

That evening her face had not made much of an impression on him; it seemed old and pale under its thick layer of dust, the hair looked dirty and grey, the eyes were flecked like a cat's, and somehow flat and shallow.

That first evening he was struck only by a woman's cool tenacity, which any seasoned soldier might envy, but when he went to her next morning to have his wounded arm dressed, and recalled

the episode of the previous evening, he was astonished and at first could not believe in the haunting, triumphant beauty of her face, striking as any picture poster, and as commanding and impressive a figure.

Dostoyevsky says somewhere: "From the first impression I conceived a reluctant liking for her." This exactly describes Voropayev's case. A week later they were great friends, and when another week went by they were beginning to be talked of as a couple who would surely marry, though they themselves were not thinking of marriage. She was an attractive and, what was more important, a clever woman. A clever person never tires or bores one, and things would have gone on as they had started if it had not been for Voropayev being seriously hit for the fourth time. At the moment when he learned that she herself had amputated his leg, it became clear to him that the old relations between them were no longer possible and now that he was disabled he could never renew them. He could not appear as anything but an old patient of hers, and certainly not as a possible husband. . . And in any case, who would care to enter into partnership for life with a man who suffered from tuberculosis and a bad liver? An old love would not have been dismayed, a new love might not stand the test. Besides, it was not a pleasant prospect for a man to start life in the position of an invalid who needed a nurse.

The last injury had driven Voropayev to seek a life other than that he had led formerly, and not with the woman of whom he had thought before. . . .

Then it was that he had thought of this journey to the south and all the nonsense about a house and garden—although, perhaps, it wasn't such nonsense after all: he himself was seriously ill, his son was on the verge of illness, and both had the prospects now of a new, unknown life, and who could say whether it would be a happy one. But there had been no choice.

Again and again Voropayev looked at the sea and the mountains to take his mind off things, and for a while succeeded. Nature in the south is a wonderful healer; it not only draws a man's attention, but makes itself felt in everything around. Nowhere else is a man so keenly aware of his eyes, ears, nose, limbs and lungs as he is in the mountains or at the southern seaside. He finds himself paying attention to sails and stars as to old acquaintances whom he has not met for a long time in the north. He is capable of falling into conversation with a tree he happens to see, and ask it about the wonderful wistaria he saw here ten years or so ago and has never forgotten. Perhaps, it is only in the south that man not only struggles with nature and masters her, but falls completely under her dominion and is guided by her according to strange and wonderful laws.

Voropayev looked at everything that was racing to meet the car, with a sense of intense anxiety, as though he had to recognize in this cavalcade of rocks, trees, bushes and birds, some familiar creature and call out to it to accompany him on his journey.

He thought of Korytov, too. His awkward acquaintance with this man and the stormy argument that had set them against each other was an unpleasant memory. What had possessed him to get drawn into such a discussion? One should not go by first impressions, however, and Korytov was very likely much better than he seemed in the first few hours of their acquaintance. Nevertheless, he could not rid himself of his dislike of this talkative administrator.

He shouldn't have bothered with him! Yes, he shouldn't have bothered!

The idea that he would see plenty of trouble with Korytov yet made him feel still more miserable and lonely.

Shreds of fog trailed between the trees, leaving its whitish-grey traces on the boughs. Fog, nothing but fog and mist everywhere. The oaks wore it on their rusty, metallically-rustling tops like dirty shepherds' cloaks, while it clung to the hawthorn and medlar trees like kerchiefs. Even the dark grass caught at white strands of clouds and covered itself with them. Something drove the clouds from the mountains and they poured through the gorges, galloped along the road and paused, trembling and swelling with every movement of the air.

The colours grew moist and merged with each other.

The dark rusty hill, with patches the tint of pomegranate skins, partly shield-

ed another, dark, deep blue like the waves at summer noonday, rich, soft, contourless; the blue spread over the gorge, which passed close by the road, the blue melted into the sky and spread into it, overflowing the border of the nearest dark reddish mountain and spreading in vague opaque washes like twilight. The colours billowed, threshed, were lost and reappeared somewhere to the side.

"I want very much to live, I want to live more than I ever wanted to before, but it is out of question to act differently. I am a father, I must bring up my little boy, and I am sick and weak, a wreck, a burden. Forgive me, Shura, forgive and forget me," his heart was crying, weeping tearlessly.

"It's going to be terribly hard for me," he said aloud, even wincing from a ghastly spasm of fear that made his whole body shrink. "At forty-three years of age, a man in my condition . . . oh, it's hard . . . to start all over again from the beginning . . . having so little strength—my strength is only imagination. . . ."

And for the first time he felt sorry that he had survived. Hunger and a terrible weariness that brought on trembling and dizziness overcame him like a fit of illness. Ah, how lonely he was! . . .

The *Victory* state farm was known for the quality of its wines. Once a private estate which had later been extended through the absorption of smaller estates and farms, it had become in the end a kind of practical institute, a laboratory of viticulture and vintnery, where any manual worker was a small scientist in his own line. Several state farms of this type formed a famous syndicate.

On Sundays scientific conferences were held at the *Victory* state farm. If there was nothing requiring special attention on the program, Shirokogorov, an expert vintner, gave a talk, to maintain interest in the conferences. People came with their children to listen to him, because he could talk like a professional storyteller. It was the same on this particular Sunday, when Voropayev, cursing himself for leaving behind his knapsack with canned food, rolled up to the grey office building in a lorry. He was feverish and would have liked nothing better than to lie down and fall asleep at once.

"Are the chiefs in?" he enquired of a little barefoot girl running past.

"The chiefs? . . Phew! They're all at the lecture!" and, with a proud toss of her head, she ran into the club.

Voropayev followed her.

In a large, clean, whitewashed room, furnished with wooden stools of every description, about fifty people were assembled to listen to a nice-looking old man with a short neatly-trimmed white beard and the clear blue eyes of a child that twinkled or at any rate expressed both animation and delight; he was not so much lecturing as giving a talk, without any definite program, guided by the questions of his listeners. This struck Voropayev as so unusual that he took out a notebook and jotted down some of the questions.

Old Shirokogorov—Voropayev guessed it was he—answered all the questions without exception, very quietly, and when there were no more he paused on the unsigned note sent up by a shy girl student on practice, and spoke of the medicinal herbs picked by schoolchildren and Young Pioneers. He quoted figures that impressed Voropayev so much that he wrote them down. Now he did not miss a word of what Shirokogorov was saying, though hunger tormented him like a wound.

The old man was speaking of the children who went hunting for medicinal herbs, and of those youthful hunters who went after the fur-bearing animals, and of the wonderful healing properties of plants and how simple it was for the children of the *Victory* state farm to help the country; at the same time it appeared that he was speaking of the health and happiness of mankind. His manner of speaking was fluent and free, yet at the same time as whimsical as verse. His listeners never tired of hearing him.

"Excuse me, Comrade Colonel . . ." Voropayev turned at the voice and blinked drowsily.

"Yes . . . yes."

"The talk is over and we're locking up. Perhaps you have come to see someone here on business?"

The speaker, a broad-shouldered, heavily-moustached man, wearing a tunic, riding breeches and cap, was looking at Voropayev in surprise, and motioning him towards the door. Though the man had not shaved recently, his face had

lost neither its roundness nor its freshness, but he looked worried.

"Oh, yes, of course. . . I have to see the director," Voropayev muttered in great embarrassment, catching his artificial limb on the chairs as he tried to rise and feeling ashamed of his sleep, his helplessness, and—as he imagined—the fact that he looked a fool.

"Well, then, please come along and talk to me. I'm Chumandrin, the director," said the man in blue, going towards the door.

It was a good thing he had gone ahead, giving Voropayev time to recover from his confusion. Of course, it was awkward that he had dozed off in the middle of the lecture, and so he began with this when he entered the director's big comfortable office with its bookcases and samples of wine in fancy bottles.

"Imagine coming all this way to meet Shirokogorov and—falling asleep during his lecture! It's a disgrace! It's a downright shame!" he said, with a smile and a characteristic gesture.

Chumandrin was tossing a bunch of keys in his hand and turning over with an air of indifference the papers on his desk, evidently waiting for the newcomer to give more information about himself.

Voropayev did not tax his patience.

"I've been sent here by Korytov."

"You're Voropayev, aren't you? . . Korytov sent us a note about you," the director said with a faint smile. "Well, I'm glad to meet you. But why didn't you come and look for me as soon as you arrived?" he asked with sudden suspicion though rather indifferently.

"So Korytov sent you a note about me?"

"Yes, he did."

"When did he contrive to do that?"

"The driver of the lorry you came on brought it. We've been waiting a good two hours for you. . . I'm afraid you've missed supper at our dining room," Chumandrin glanced out of the window and gave a low whistle of disappointment when he saw by the sign on the door that the place was closed. "Never mind, we'll fix something up for you. Korytov writes that you didn't even get your traveller's ration cards. That's a pity. Let's go and see the old man, he's waiting."

Chumandrin jumped from one subject to another as he talked, as though he was in a hurry to get somewhere, and Voropayev could hardly keep up with him at first.

"But—perhaps it's not convenient for me to go to him now and I'd better not come yet, after disgracing myself like this?"

"Why shouldn't it be convenient?"

"What's up?" Voropayev was thinking to himself as they went down the long, dark corridor together. "Curious—Korytov's attention, what's the idea of it? Does it come from caution or consideration? . . More likely from caution, I should think—he wanted to warn them of my coming, so that, on the one hand, I should not surprise them, and on the other hand, to remind me that my chiefs are always wide-awake." Still, he found Korytov's unsolicited attention rather touching.

"Listen, Comrade Chumandrin, do you think Shirokogorov noticed I was asleep?"

"He was the one who guessed where we ought to look for you—you might have been locked in till morning. . . Never mind, we'll find something to eat and we'll feel better. The old man's listening to the communiqué. . . Careful—there's a step . . . mind you don't stumble. . . Well, this is Voropayev. Let me introduce you. . . ."

An old man dressed in a dark blue suit got up from a deep armchair.

"How d'you do. . . We've broken through northeast of Budapest. . . Come and sit down here in the armchair . . . let's listen. . . ."

Shirokogorov's office was well furnished in pre-war style—carpets on the floor, the walls lined with books, and a massive oaken desk, with piles of books and magazines, some with bookmarkers of narrow slips of blue paper, some lying open at the page he had been using for some reference. The couch and armchairs in one corner were arranged at a small round table on which lay albums, at the wall stood a showcase with attractive bottles of wine. There was also a very fine photographic panorama of the grape harvest, and a lamp with a beautiful silk shade. The whole ensemble served as a fitting frame for the figure of the old man. He was not very tall, but perfectly, almost artistically built. The face, with the white beard and keen eyes, sparkling with kindliness

and humour, was reminiscent of Anatole France. The black silk skull cap he wore on his crisp grey hair suited him. His hands were sinewy, sunburnt and sensitive. The long, lean fingers were constantly in movement, forever telling or asking, or perhaps puzzling over something. Glancing at them, one could guess what the old man's thoughts were occupied with at the moment.

But the most striking thing about him were not his hands, and not his eyes, old and cheerful, but his glance, which from time to time seemed to raise him from his armchair to a formidable height and reveal him in all the force of his personality. It was the glance of a great general. Voropayev caught himself thinking, absurdly, that he had almost stood at attention once or twice, catching the old man's scrutiny on him.

Having switched off the radio, Shirokogorov addressed Voropayev with boyish enthusiasm.

"And now, my dear Colonel, what about you? . . No, you needn't tell us anything. . . We read Gennadi Alexandrovich's note, telling us that a well-known lecturer was coming to see us, straight from the front, and that we were to exploit him. . . Well, we don't need much telling, we start the preparations, notify the audience and then it turns out . . . you needn't wave your arms about at me, you'll only make a draught . . . and it turns out, he's here fast asleep."

"I was dead tired and chilled to the bone, and—honestly—I was so absorbed in your lecture. . . ."

"Explanations won't help, dear Colonel, though I believe every word: I know I'm always overcome by an extraordinary drowsiness in a new place. . . You can only make up for your fault in one way: have something to eat, some wine to drink, and then take your place at the map of the fronts and tell us anything you please."

It was impossible to refuse.

"First of all you must shed a little light on our ignorance about Budapest, Colonel. . . ."

That was how Voropayev's acquaintance with the celebrated Shirokogorov began.

After making short work of some butterless rice brought him by Chumandrin, and washing it down with a glass of excellent Riesling, Voropayev felt in pretty good shape. There was something of the atmosphere of the front about this evening, and he snatched eagerly at it, for it augured well for his still somewhat vague civilian future.

He had a thorough knowledge of the course of the Danube battles and showed himself not only as an excellent lecturer but as almost an eyewitness, and a participant in them.

The clock in the corridor struck eleven.

Voropayev had warmed up and got quickly into his stride with his story. The war lived again before his eyes. When he had done with the Hungarian theatre of war, he went on to the Czechoslovakian, gave his personal impressions of Rumania and, in passing, touched on the events in Athens (a state of siege had been declared in Athens a few days previously). He remembered the morning of August 31st when he had entered Bucharest, riding on the armour of a tank. His head had gone round with happiness. The heavy, perspiring Rumanian women with eyes like black glistening prunes had scrambled onto the tank to kiss the men on the armour. His face had been smeared with lipstick, like so many scratches. Had he been wounded that day, he would hardly have felt the pain.

". . . but still grander, more sacred and unique was the sixteenth of September."

"Wait—what happened that day?"

"We entered Sophia. . . ."

"Aha—yes, that's so. . . Excuse me for interrupting. . . ."

Voropayev filled his glass. His hand shook a little. A drop of transparent wine trickled slowly from finger to wrist.

"God grant inspiration to some one to recount the events of that day for posterity!"

Shirokogorov and Chumandrin filled their glasses, too.

"I couldn't read the articles from the front without emotion," the professor said.

"Emotion isn't the word for it!" Voropayev broke in. "There's no word that fully expresses what was going on. It was Russia, you understand? I bore on my shoulders the ten centuries that divided us. To this day it seems to me that my name must be known all over Sophia and that I know everyone in the city. Honestly!"

Voropayev punctuated his sentences now and again with a sip from the glass filled up by the silent Chumandrin, whose face expressed every shade of blissful satisfaction. And the more Voropayev drank, the more he wanted to talk and the more interesting and inspired his account became.

Shirokogorov, fingering his short beard, put in a question from time to time, Chumandrin's share in the talk was confined to the pauses when, as he poured out the wine, he managed to get in:

"You listen to people and see how clever you've grown, much cleverer than before. . . ."

Later, when he had almost lost his voice, Voropayev told them briefly, in a half-joking tone, what they wanted to know about his encounter with Korytov, his trouble with the house problem, his son who was to be brought here from Moscow soon, his own loneliness and the feeling that he would never again know the happiness that was his while he was in the army.

"I simply tumbled out of happiness as if it were out of an aeroplane. It's all left behind there—glory and comrades and all . . . all, and that Korytov wouldn't help me even to find a house."

Since the housing question was neither military nor scientific, but purely organizational in its nature, Chumandrin found it convenient to take it up with the ease and lightness with which his companions treated the problems of their competence and, assuming an expression of aggrieved sympathy, he mumbled.

"Good God! Imagine that, now! Couldn't find a cottage for you! Listen to me, Voropayev, I'll give you three cottages right away, if you want them. This very day, or at any rate—at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. Are you agreeable to work for us? Tell me first—do you agree?"

Impelled, like most men when they have had a bit to drink, to carry out a proposal straight away, he leaned over to Shirokogorov and said in a hoarse, conspiratorial whisper:

"There's that . . . you know, that red-haired chap . . . in any case, he's being taken off the job to be promoted. . . That means I won't have any assistant, I'll be left alone like an Arab in the desert. That's right, isn't it, Sergei Constantinovich? Besides that, there is no club manager . . ." and catching an approving expression on the old man's face, he gripped Voropayev by his artificial limb and giving it a slap with his big fleshy hand that made it creak, he said with a significant shake of the head:

"It'll be the easiest thing in the world, old chap. I'll ring up the regional committee office straight away. Such an orator, a man with your Party experience, and they wanted to make a propagandist of you!" he straightened up suddenly and burst out laughing, his mouth darkened from red wine.

"And of all things—you didn't even get a house! . . Ever heard anything like that, Sergei Constantinovich? Th y didn't even give him a house to live in! Now what do you think of Korytov!"

"Gennadi Alexandrovich Korytov is a clever fellow, but anyone may fail," the old man commented cautiously. As he was non-Party, he considered it bad taste to scoff at the leading local Party people.

"Your Korytov didn't strike me as an efficient businesslike person," Voropayev blurted out for no particular reason with glaring tactlessness, realizing while he spoke that he should not have said it so and almost cursing himself aloud for his unforgivable lack of self-control. "The people have a hard time of it here," he added, trying to smooth it over a little.

Chumandrin hastened to fill the glasses.

"Where do they not have a hard time of it?" he said through his teeth. "People are having a hard time of it everywhere these days, brother. Wartime! Korytov's people are having a hard time and I daresay your people at the front didn't have it any easier, either."

Leaning back in his deep armchair, Shirokogorov slowly placed the tips of his fingers together, close to his lips, as though testing their sensitiveness. His shrewd blue eyes were fixed on Voropayev belligerently, challenging him to a battle without further delay.

"Winning a war like this is no joke!" he said.

"People who expect everything to be easy should be put down as idlers . . . yes, idlers and scoundrels! For who else could find it easy except the like? . ."

He steadied his elbows on the arms of the chair and, moving his hands slightly, as though fanning them, he spoke to Voropayev: "Was it easy for you, yourself, my dear Colonel? And was it only made difficult by Korytov alone, and only here?"

The talk grew sharper and stormier as they passed on to hardships of army life—the things they talked about at that late hour!

Chumandrin, laughing and snapping his fingers with satisfaction every now and again, still went on filling the glasses, repeating to himself a stray sentence from a joke he had remembered and considered funny: "Put it down, Karapet—you know the proper form."

Soon Voropayev found himself repeating the meaningless phrase and even asking Shirokogorov to repeat it, but the old man politely declined.

"A little drink never does a good fellow any harm," Voropayev declared, clapping the old man on the shoulder. "What do you think?"

He was living "aloud", so to speak, inside out, his feelings exposed, hiding nothing.

"Well, I feel like having some sleep!" He fancied he only thought the words but Chumandrin jumped up at once and led him away, with an arm around his shoulders.

"Put it down, Karapet, you know the proper form," Voropayev said with a wave of his hand, and both men burst out laughing for no particular reason.

He was awakened by something warm caressing his face. A light blue curtain cut the large window in two and everything in the room shone with a gilded blue reflection, almost like moonlight, while blue streams shimmered and flowed on the dazzling white ceiling. He could not understand at first that it was the sea outside the window and that the sunshine was caressing his face, but when he realized it all, he got up and dressed quickly.

Just then he heard steps and Chumandrin's voice asking:

"Good morning. How do you like the local scenery we're showing you? Doesn't it tempt you? How's your head?"

"Your wine made me forget everything," Voropayev replied. "What I really came for was to find out about the collective farms Korytov has placed in my care."

"So you think of going, after all?"

"Yes, I must."

"Well, you know best. There's your cottage over yonder if you want to see it?" Chumandrin's fleshy forefinger picked it out of the view, a narrow rectangle of a white house, resembling an electric high-voltage transformer chamber or a pigeon cote.

"A regular paradise, isn't it? That's what I was saying—why bother with Korytov? Come over and live at my place for as long as you can stand it."

"If I'd have met you three days ago, Fyodor Ivanovich, I'd have become your devoted servant for life, but now I can't—it wouldn't be the right thing. . . ."

"It isn't the right thing to steal money and deceive your wife . . . I agree. And see, there's another empty house a bit higher up, on the cliff there? It's on a bigger scale than this. I can let you have that, you'll pay rent for it. Let's talk it over. Bring your boy here and have a housewarming. I'll give you a fifteen years' lease, I promise."

"Believe me, Fyodor Ivanovich, I can't."

"Anybody would think I was forcing some illness on you or teaching you to steal."

"I'd feel ashamed to go back on Korytov now. I quite understand that you're ready to do me a service I couldn't do for myself—but I can't accept it, without going against my own conscience."

"What has changed in your position these two days? If you had given up the district altogether, I could understand it. But anyway, take your time. I'm not going to keep you against your will. Let's go and have breakfast, and meanwhile you'll hear something about your collective farms."

"No, thanks, I don't want any breakfast, I'll start right away."

"Just as you like. I never care much for breakfast myself after making a night of it. That was an evening, wasn't it? Very nice, I must say. Cheers one up a lot."

As he conducted his guest through the park to the highway, Chumandrin gave Voropayev a general idea of the collective farms he was in such a hurry to visit.

The nearest, the *First of May*, was hardly damaged, he said, but was made up for the most part of new people who had come here from the Kuban and Don; the two others—*Kalinin* and *Mikoyan*—had been plundered and picked clean, and most of the people shipped to Germany. Strangers had arrived and replaced those who had gone, but they were plainly sorry they had come and were ready to go home at the first chance.

"Then why the devil did they come here? They knew where they were going when they started out, didn't they?"

"You knew where you were going, too, didn't you? Of course, you did. And were you able to fix yourself up? You weren't. Neither were they. It turned out they weren't any wiser than you. Well, here we are on the highroad. You keep straight ahead. Come and see us when you've a chance."

"Thanks, I'll certainly do that."

"And think over that house at your leisure."

"Righto."

"I'm keeping it for you a while, see?"

"Righto."

. . . The sun was blinding to the point of blackness. The windows of the white dove-cote house down by the sea glittered with the brilliance of jewels.

"Yet happiness had seemed so near, so easy to get," he recalled Pushkin's words.

When all was said and done, why shouldn't he go to Chumandrin, why shouldn't he live in the lovely little dove-cote by the sea, and why must he sleep between borrowed sheets in other people's rooms and work for Korytov?

It was all so utterly stupid and absurd.

After all, he had come here for the purpose of recovering his health, and getting stronger—it was solely for this purpose that the people in Moscow had let him go; he would not be doing anything despicable if he had parted with Korytov.

It was not for a lifetime, surely, that he had come here, and given his word to Korytov, it was only temporarily, so that he could pull himself together, get going and then—return to his beloved work, if he won the battle for his health. And, in case he did not win it or it dragged out for long years, he would not even be able to go on working for Korytov.

"Really, it looks quixotic!" he said several times aloud and promised himself that on his way back he would drop in on Chumandrin, talk things over and come to an agreement. But deep down lay the thought that, of course, he would not go to Chumandrin, because it would undoubtedly be unworthy and mean, though it might not appear so. This last idea prevailed over self mockery and the promise he had given to himself. It happens like that in life! And there was nothing to be done about it.

The evening before, notwithstanding his skirmish with Korytov, he had felt sorry for the man, worn and harassed by hard work, and he was ashamed to desert him, now that he had seen for himself how difficult the circumstances were.

"Yes, I've got to help him. I'll give him a hand for a while and then I'll get out. So that he can't say I just came here on tour."

It was not a very long tramp and soon the easy road and inspiring morning distracted his thoughts from practical matters.

As he trudged on, he amused himself by looking about him appraisingly, like a real-estate purchaser.

"That's a nice little site for a house!" he exclaimed aloud, pausing to admire a precipitous reddish crag, the edge of which jutted out from behind the turnings in the road and ended in a sheer drop to the sea.

The first thing that occurred to him was to call it the "Eagle's Peak", for the rock reminded him of the eagles' eyries in fairy tales. No timid or delicate bird could nest there because of the piercing winds and the general bareness of the crag, on which nothing grew save two or three tamarisks stunted by the harsh climate, and a twisted pine clinging to the rocks.

"The spaces an eagle loves! . . Strange that no one ever thought in olden times of building a castle or a hermitage here!"

He stood there, forgetful of everything, building an imaginary "Eagle's Palace" with a stairs cut in the rock and descending to the very sea, a large rambling garden, terraced down to the shore valley.

"Some happy people could make their home here," he said, and thought over

the people to whom he might suggest it.

He would naturally have preferred to build his own home up here on Eagle's Peak. Still, perhaps not. There are proportions and scope that are incompatible with personal comfort. A rock such as this might shelter a Prometheus, but if not Prometheus, then at least a multitude of mortals. . . .

CHAPTER TWO

The meeting at the collective farm had been going on for over four hours now.

The chairman of the farm, a tall man with a short muscular back rounded like a Cossack's saddle, was waving the doctor's notes he had received, releasing people from the heavy work, and was imploring them to turn out tomorrow to dig in the vineyards, because the time for it was long overdue.

The silence was unbroken, as though his audience were asleep. The wind howling outside the windows sometimes drowned the speaker's voice. What was going on that wild night in the crooked dark lanes that took the place of streets?

The wind pierced the eyes and made breathing hard. The ground slid from underfoot, and the air was filled with a shrieking and moaning as though some living thing was being tormented, far up in the heights.

It was lonely and weary here for newcomers, and God Almighty, what use was it to talk to them of working in the vineyards when many villagers were laid low with malaria, crippled and useless with rheumatism, while the incongruities and absurdities in the new life were infinite.

And, of course, the country doctor was right in his way when he gave the collective farmers notes exempting them from rough work, and put some on the sick list, but still Voropayev had a hard time of it to keep from cursing at the top of his voice that disproportionately zealous medical practitioner who was, fortunately for himself, sitting a good way off, at the other end of the presidium's bench.

Suddenly he had a vague feeling that he had been appealed to, so closing up the notebook in which he was idly amusing himself, making scrolls, he looked around, smiling at the audience.

The chairman was standing, his profile towards Voropayev, and asking (not for the first time, apparently), what was to be done with folks like this who had no fellow feeling and sympathy.

Voropayev found that he had not a single idea in his head, but there was no other course open to him. Sighing and moistening his momentarily parched lips, he got to his feet, and, with his artificial limb creaking, advanced to the edge of the platform.

A dead silence fell over the audience.

A nervous flush stung Voropayev's face. He cleared his throat. This was the last thing that he could permit himself.

"Are there any ex-service men in the audience?" he asked hoarsely, though he did not know himself what he wanted to find out and why.

"Yes. . . There are some . . ." a few drowsy voices responded.

"Well, now, let's have a look at you. . . Come out to the front row, friends."

They came forward wearily and hesitatingly.

"What about the soldiers' wives—are they to stay in the back seats?" a squeaky voice came from the back of the hall, evoking a burst of low laughter from some of the women.

Then Voropayev, for no particular reason, started to tell them that he had awakened in the morning while he was on his way here and, not finding his artificial limb at first, had got a fright and wondered if it had been stolen.

The sudden change of subject, or the fact that the story really sounded funny when it was told, put the people in a better humour, they roused themselves, fidgeted on the benches and moved nearer.

After he had recounted two or three episodes from adventures that had never happened to him but which illustrated very well the difficulties facing the returned army man when he tried to understand what was going on here, he gave an amusing picture of an outsider's view of the collective farm. He spared no colours, drew sharp contrasts, and very soon had the whole room humming.

The men who had been smoking in the corridor came back, crowding in the doorway, and disturbed those in the back rows. A few loud rebukes addressed to

them came from the public. The men who had been at the front were seated in the first line of benches; together with Voropayev in his army tunic, decorated with three rows of ribbons and four wound stripes, they united to maintain order: every now and again they called on the others to make less noise and tried to preserve silence.

Voropayev had to pause and take breath, but something—perhaps it was the deep intuition, the elusive feeling that we sometimes call the subconscious, impelled him not to wait but attack without delay.

"Quiet, now! Keep your places!"

They all stood motionless.

"Comrades from the front, what's going on here?" he began, raising his voice. "Surely it wasn't for this we fought at the front—to perish at home. Aren't you ashamed to look on quietly at idlers, lazy good-for-nothings and drunkards? Have you gone clean mad? Or just plain blind? And is this the only cure for your blindness..." he gave a casual jerk of his head, indicating the chairman and paused a moment to let the wave of laughter pass,... "this sort of double concave lens standing before you. Anyone would think you'd got your mouths sealed with tar. He ought to be run off the platform. What can he talk about?—if he has let his vineyards go to rack and ruin, if he keeps a doctor like this who is ready to give a week's sick leave to everyone who has a pimple on his bottom, as you may say. This is a regular pimply paradise! (the laughter broke out again, not at the coarseness of the joke but at its truth. He felt this and emboldened, went on.) That wasn't the way we behaved at Stalingrad. What division were you in, friend?" he asked abruptly of a tall man who had the puffy face of a soldier just released from the hospital, and wore the Stalingrad Defence medal.

"The 39th, Comrade Colonel," he stammered almost inarticulately, as he stood smartly to attention.

Voropayev himself had not been in that particular division but he knew very well that no matter how many divisions there were, pretty much the same thing had taken place in them all, and so he stretched out his hands with pleasure, as though he had often been with that same 39th and said:

"D'you remember Zakharchenko?.. The wireless operator? He wasn't in your division, of course, but he was known all over Stalingrad... You'll recall him in a minute—the fellow who, after being hit seven times, dived into the Volga to get the company's radio installation until finally he dragged it up from the bottom. He was hit for the eighth time, while he was diving... And the queer thing was he'd lived to the age of thirty without ever doing any swimming or diving...."

"That wasn't Zakharchenko—it was Kolesnichenko," the Stalingrad man strove to say articulately. "Of course, I remember him, he was in our division... He's a Hero of the Soviet Union now... Of course I remember him, one of our fellows, he was."

"There was a case like that on the Dnieper, too," said another voice, accompanied by the faint clink of medals, as the veteran joined easily in the conversation which had now been got going.

The command post of the meeting had shifted unnoticed from the platform to the auditorium itself. Prompt action was needed now; Voropayev descended by the narrow steps (he was helped down quickly) and, surrounded by the army men, continued the talk without pause.

"D'you remember Kiev, boys? Who took part in the capture of Kiev? Some fighting, eh? And Korsun-Shevchenkovsky? You were there?.. Shake hands, we're friends for the rest of our lives... Maybe you were at Jassy, too?" he went on, throwing his arm around someone. "Perhaps you were wounded there?.. Here, shake... Who operated on you? Not Dr. Goreva, surely? That would be too much of a coincidence! And you, friend, I daresay you've seen more than I have," and once more he laid his hand on the shoulder of the Stalingrad veteran with the pale, puffy face, who, as Voropayev noticed now, had only one eye and one arm.

"I was given up for dead ten times, but I-I'm n-not dead yet," he stammered, his lips twitching convulsively. "And you won't catch me dying for the eleventh...."

"Where else were you fighting, Comrade Colonel? Were you at the taking of Belgrade?" eager voices asked on all sides.

"Whoever's been at Sevastopol and Stalingrad, boys, has been everywhere!"

"That's true! . . When were you at Sevastopol?"

"I'll tell you all about it later, boys. Now I've got to announce that the collective farm is in a tight corner! . . The ex-army men must organize and head storm groups. . . Sick leave's granted to the dead and no one else—the rest have to come out with us to the attack! . . What's your name? Ogarnov? Make a list of the people, Ogarnov . . . quick now! . . Don't let's waste a moment. . . Suddenness is half the battle. You haven't forgotten that, I hope. . . ."

The Stalingrad man looked blissfully happy as he darted aside, and at that moment, when it seemed that nothing could hinder Voropayev's rising domination over the spirit of the people, when it seemed that the smell of gunpowder was in the air, and every living thing was astir as before an actual attack, and excited whispered orders were heard: "Spades! . . Look sharp! . . Lights! . . Where's the first storm group?"—a woman's piercing scream was heard, then sounds of a muffled struggle and a plump, round, perspiring woman, with blue eyes so bold that it was almost embarrassing to look into them, rushed straight up to Voropayev, thrusting the soldiers aside and stopping short as though he had checked her on the run.

"Where've you come from to bother my head, I'd like to know?" she screamed. "I'm not going to let my wounded man . . . you stop that . . . I won't allow him . . ." and with that she threw her arms around Ogarnov, the man with the Stalingrad medal, who, looking ashamed, abashed, freed himself.

"But you'll allow him to disgrace himself?" Voropayev shouted at her. "And you won't stop anyone from making a mockery of his glory?. . Hold your tongue when I'm speaking. . . You're a bit late with your care for your husband! You should have pitied him before, not now, when we are disgraced . . . Follow me, whoever values honour will follow us! Forward!" and, raising his voice louder and louder and giving each new sentence the tone of a command, he practically ran from the club and led the people out into the dark, windy night.

The great thing was not to slacken the tempo, the nervous tension and spell of the "front" atmosphere, that had been created so successfully. What magical power, what strength of will were in the words: "attack, storm, forward, follow me!"

A blustering, howling wind was blowing, the clouds were driven across the sky, obscuring the moon, but still it was fairly light.

Voropayev stumbled and nearly fell several times. A thin shoulder slipped under his arm and two small chapped hands caught the sleeve of his overcoat from the other side.

"You'll be my runners. . . What do they call you?"

"I'm Stepka Ogarnov," said the owner of the thin shoulder offered in support.

The other boy who had taken Voropayev's arm, added:

"And I'm his pal, Vitka Sapega."

"All right, Vitya, you run to the club and get that red cloth off the table—we're going to make banners of it just now. . . Know anybody who plays the accordion around here?"

Vitka's reply came back from some distance:

"Righto, I'll fetch a player, too."

"We'll make five banners and give one to each of the five storm groups! Who's ever carried the standard into battle?"

"I did . . . at Novorossiisk. . . And marching into Lvov, too."

"When did you march into Lvov—where from?" voices demanded.

"So you know the job? . . That's fine! No time to lose. We'll see another fight yet. . . We'll get a chance to show our stuff! . . Concentrate there."

Now it was perhaps no longer the words, or even their sense, but rather the intonations, the strength and thrill of the voice that had acquired the main significance. He was hardly thinking of what he was shouting, he only listened to the sound of his voice and strove to feel whether it was leading the people or not.

Then, like stars flying low over the earth, the hurricane lamps were seen on the hill slope: the team leaders were hurrying for the spades.

The wives, arguing loudly with their husbands and scolding them, went on ahead. One could tell the player was running as the accordion struck up. The

leaders of the teams sang out words of command, as though on parade:

"First . . . team. . . ."

"That's my father," said Stepka Ogarnov, snuffling. "He's trembling, he's so cross. . . ."

"Second. . . ."

"And that's Uncle Egorov, a sailor. . . Hope he won't beat up father. He's always dead set against my father and tries to show off before my mother, that sea devil. . . ."

The air was filled with shouting, calling, whistling, clapping, and something like the glow of a fire appeared in a storm of laughing and noise from a distance, flashing between the black silhouettes of the trees. Lit by a tarry torch, a two-wheeled cart on which a barrel of water giving off a strong smell of wine, rolled from side to side, was bowling along at a good rate. On the cart stood Ogarnova, her legs wide apart so as to keep her balance over the bumps and ruts and turns, as she flourished the torch carelessly, forgetful of herself. When she caught sight of Voropayev, she laughed challengingly and beckoned to him.

"So you stirred them up, eh? And you thought the women would lag behind? . . Here, have a drink, and make it snappy, don't keep 'em waiting. . . You won't get drunk on this!"

The low, smoky torch in her hand lit up her figure like that of a conjuror at the circus, and the general feeling was that they were expecting her to do some startling trick or exploit—most likely the former.

"Who's to be the first to drink? . . Whoever leads in battle has luck!"

The boy's thin shoulder started convulsively under Voropayev's arm.

"You've got a good mother—she's a plucky one!" Voropayev said hastily, to put him at ease.

"O-oh, she's daring, she is!" Stepka gasped proudly—evidently he had been afraid of a different opinion. "They say hereabouts that there's nobody braver but the devil in hell!"

"That's true enough, very likely," flashed through Voropayev's mind. "Although she isn't much like the women Nekrasov describes in his poem, still, she is the kind to stop a runaway horse or rush into a house on fire. Where do they get this courage, the women?"

But he had no time to think of that now.

The moon, sailing clear of the clouds that beset it, shone full on the vineyard on the hillside. The storm groups stuck their spades and hoes into the earth, here and there picks shone in the moonlight.

The vines were very mixed, some small, gnarled and spreading like antlers, others well formed and neat like seven-branched candlesticks. And it somehow seemed as though they were all animate and only pretending to be plants.

Voropayev could see plainly now what was going on around him.

It was not hard work, and—more important still—everyone was happy. Like everything unexpected, the work brought hither to unknown qualities in people which in itself was valuable even if the digging they did in the uncertain light was not of the best.

The first thing Voropayev did next morning was to go and see the army men who had not been present at the meeting the previous evening.

His first visit was to Senior Lieutenant Boyarishnikov, just back from the army.

"Hallo!" the man called out from behind the door. "Who's there?"

"May I come in?" Voropayev asked, as he entered.

"Try it, why not?" the voice retorted rather rudely. "A-ah, it's you, Comrade! What's up?"

"May I sit down?"

"Sit down if you like. Only I must warn you—I don't play any part here; you've evidently come about the collective farm. . . ."

Voropayev took off his cap and mopped his damp brow.

"I knew beforehand that you weren't playing any part in it, and that's a bad thing. You ought to. Where were you at the front?"

Boyarishnikov frowned and made a gesture as though he was cutting the air.

"That stuff won't work with me, you know. I've met plenty of demagogues like you."

Yet it was hard to avoid answering Voropayev's steady gaze.

"I went wherever the command sent me. I'm under no obligation to report to all and sundry. Going around gabbing

to everyone about it! You don't know much about the regulations, Comrade Colonel."

Voropayev sat looking at him, hardly breathing, scrutinizing him like something astonishing, and the persistence of this wordless question seemingly oppressed and depressed Boyarishnikov.

"I was guarding the enemies of my country. You don't like the idea? I didn't fight, I wasn't wounded, I am not shell shocked, I'm simply a sick man, there's no sense in your looking me over like that, Comrade Colonel. I haven't any decorations of any importance, and still, my conscience is clear."

Nevertheless, it appeared that his conscience bothered him. Instead of keeping an aggrieved silence, he went on obstinately with his explanations.

"Taking me by storm is no go. I know a thing or two about that myself," he said briefly, his gestures filling out his sentences. His thoughts did not branch out into subordinate clauses, they were as short as a stick.

This alone—this inability to express himself, this scorn of the rich dashing and elaborate phraseology, that is so characteristic of Russian speech and constitutes its principal charm, aroused Voropayev's furious hatred of this official whose fighting days were already over, and who had nothing Soviet about him, although he might be honest enough within his limits. Voropayev decided to test him, staking on his ambition.

"No point in getting your hair off, Boyarishnikov," he said in an almost apologetic tone. "I didn't come here to tell you that it wasn't the right thing for you not to come out with the rest, and was still less the right thing for you to raise objections to my way of tackling the work. Far from it. . . I came for quite another purpose. You wouldn't care to take on the job of chairman of the collective farm, would you?"

Boyarishnikov was frankly astonished by the suggestion and showed it in every wrinkle of his startled face.

"Chairman?"

"Yes. Chairman of the collective farm."

"N-no-o, thanks," he replied with glib effrontery, looking at Voropayev with contempt now. "N-no-no, that would never do for me. . . ."

"Why not?"

"My nerves would never stand it. Besides, I've come to an understanding with a building office here. . . ."

He said this with an immense dignity that suggested he was engaged on top-priority work.

"That's a pity," Voropayev stood up and put on his damp cap. "That's a pity. When you're expelled from the Party, you'll find you haven't a single trump card you need in your hand."

"Don't you worry, I'll have them all right. I wish you good-day. I'll make you answer in court yet—for going to extremes. Whoever heard of such a thing as arranging a storming attack on a collective farm? This way, this way, keep to the left, that's right. Good-day to you!"

On leaving Boyarishnikov, Voropayev made for the doctor's only to find that he had left on a lorry going to Korytov: he had probably gone to complain.

From the doctor's, he went on to see Ogarnov, who had not gone to bed that night.

Wearing his best tunic and all his decorations and medals, pinned on anyhow, Ogarnov was allotting people to different teams in a fault-finding tone.

Egorov, Gagarchenko and Paussov, whose faces were red, sleepy and swollen with the sharp wind, conversed with each other in interjections, without stopping to take the shag-and-newspaper cigarettes they had rolled, out of their mouths. They were all grimly concentrated. The battle of the night was still going on.

Egorov had led the second storm group that night. Now he had been given the tobacco plantation team. A man of splendid physique, with a face that expressed frank contempt of anything that came within his field of vision, he shook his head ruefully just now, for he did not think much of any of the people he had been given and called them all parasites. Gagarchenko had been given the vineyard team, Paussov had the vegetable garden lot—the least important.

"And who are you going to give the first team to?" Voropayev asked, seeing that Ogarnov by force of circumstances had been made the head over all the teams, and showing by his question that he approved of this order of things.

"I've put my wife in my place—you know her. . . ."

"Will she manage?"

"We'll take her off if she doesn't," said Ogarnov, smiling so shyly that they all understood at once that he would never dare to do such a thing.

"I'll manage no worse than you, I daresay," she retorted from behind the partition, and, glancing out a moment, showed in a grin her unnaturally white, gleaming teeth. "Have you had your breakfast, Comrade Colonel? Come round here and have something to eat."

Ogarnova sliced up some bacon and set before him a pink plastic bowl of pickled tomatoes and a tumbler of red wine that looked strong and cloyingly sweet even to the eye."

"Here, this'll settle your nerves, Comrade Colonel," she said with a slightly conspiratorial smile. "I must have frightened you last night—I was awful, wasn't I?"

And he, responding with the same conspiratorial glance, nodded an assent.

When he left Ogarnov, he went to see the secretary of the Party organization.

"Have you got any interesting people here?"

"Oh, any number! . . Only they aren't mine."

"What do you mean by that?"

"They're only here temporarily. Newcomers, that is."

"Well, come along out with me, will you?"

A fitful, almost drunken rain danced here and there between the trees. It was very slippery underfoot.

When they reached a house with unglazed windows curtained with a soldier's waterproof ground-sheet, the secretary puffed out his cheeks and, frowning, called:

"Yuri Podnebesko!"

A woman's alarmed voice answered:

"Just a minute—just wait one minute, please."

They waited. A minute or two passed and then a very handsome young fellow with a curly flaxen beard, as light as though it had been peroxided, limped out, pulling a woman's dressing gown around him. His face was so young that the beard looked almost false.

Voropayev could not help smiling.

The secretary introduced them to each other awkwardly, as though reconciling them, and then, not knowing what to do next, stood scratching the back of his head.

The bearded youth's eyes sparkled.

"It was you who started all that business last night, was it? Good work! If it hadn't been for the rain that set all my bones aching, I'd have been in on it. Natasha! Come on out!"

A woman raised the edge of the waterproof window blind and peeped out cautiously, then disappeared. Voropayev noticed she was wearing only a brassiere.

"Here's the comrade, Natasha, who started the night storm. This is my wife. I'd like to invite you in, but you see. . . ."

"Oh, Yuri, you're crazy!" she protested.

"No, I'm only saying," her husband interrupted, "that I'd be only too glad to ask them in, but my pants are in the wash, and I haven't any others. . . You see what I'm wearing?"

Voropayev slipped his soldier's greatcoat off his shoulders.

"Give your wife her dressing gown, put on my coat, and let's go inside. I've got to talk to you."

They were so poor that the half-empty little box of powder with the foreign label, on the edge of the wooden stool, seemed a luxury.

Their life story might be told eloquently by her thin plywood trunk with the dented side, and his army greatcoat which served as a family blanket.

There are families that during the years of war have gone through the bitterness of loss, but have acquired glory and honour.

There are families that have not acquired glory and honour, but have avoided loss.

There are families that have known the hardships of evacuation, partings with dear ones and anxiety for the lives of men at the front, and show no traces other than greying temples.

But there are families upon whom the war has piled up trials, but which have stood them, endured, borne up under blows that followed close upon one another. They have not yielded honour, or conscience, or grudged blood, nerves, tears or courage.

Once, when the hard-pressed 37th army was fighting with the last of its strength in the Caucasian Ranges, in Northern Ossetia, Voropayev had seen high up on a crag a tree so storm-twisted that it looked like an octopus. If the wind could have taken on tangible form,

it would have assumed that of the distorted tree—the modelled representation of storm. The split trunk was bent in throes, the boughs twisted like ropes, reaching out restlessly, wrathfully, away from the trunk, the twigs clutching at the air with gnarled fingers.

The entire trunk leaned windward and even its few coarse leaves did not turn towards the sun, but looked windward, ready every moment to catch at the next gust and be borne away with it.

Young Podnebesko, and especially his wife, reminded Voropayev of the mountain tree which had nothing but bad weather to rear it. They were no more than twenty and when they smiled they looked like children. But the moment they grew thoughtful and relaxed for a moment their control of their facial muscles, youth and happiness vanished, giving place to an expression of pain.

The young man, as it turned out, had been wounded and shell shocked several times, and he had not yet properly recovered. And she with her fine fair hair, which quivering around her head, in the light like a wreath of feather grass touched with gold, and with the deep blue, darkly-shaded eyes of a happy girl, winced with an attack of polyneuritis, and kept smoking nervously.

Her arms were unnaturally thin and whether she was laughing or listening attentively, the weariness never left her face.

But both of them gave the impression of being not only staunch but also talented people, and, as in the case of all truly gifted people, new features, qualities unknown before, were discerned in their general make-up.

"When were you demobilized?" Voropayev asked.

"We are on furlough for an indefinite period."

"You've come here to recover your health?"

"Yes, if I have a chance."

She added sorrowfully:

"So far we haven't had a chance."

He laid his hands comfortingly on her thin knees.

"We've worn out and sold everything to the last stitch. The only hope left to us is—the splendid air here. Sun, air and water—these are our best nourishment. Otherwise we'd be—oho! What do you think?"

She shook her head with its feathery crown of soft hair.

"Never mind—we'll manage somehow."

"What's your profession?"

They exchanged glances and laughed.

"We haven't any profession. We went to the front straight from school. I'm a sapper, and she is a nurse. We are thinking of taking correspondence courses—but we haven't a bean."

"Why don't you get demobilized if you're certain you're unfit for service?"

"What about the rations and this and that?"

"But supposing you were offered a pretty decent job tomorrow?"

"Then I'd get demobilized tomorrow."

"Well, look here, sit down and write out a few particulars about yourself. You, too," Voropayev said, turning to Natasha. "You haven't any paper? What am I to do with you? Come to the collective farm office and write it there. You've nothing to go out in, is that it?"

With a wave of his hand, he got up.

"What an ass that Korytov must be! Only a corpse would know as little about local people as he does," Voropayev thought.

"Are there any others hereabouts like you?"

"Yes. Four or five."

"Then tell them to come to me. Voropayev is my name. You may expect a messenger from me today."

From the Podnebeskos' he went back to the Ogarnovs'—to see her, really. She had not tidied herself up yet.

"You don't happen to have an extra skirt you could spare for a while?"

She looked at him quizzically and laughed.

"You'd better take Victor's breeches, or you may find a skirt a bit draughty, not being used to it. What do you want it for? A fancy dress party?"

He explained quickly that it was not for himself. She did not believe him at first.

"Some fly-by-nights, I suppose and you want to give 'em old clothes!"

It was not without difficulty that he persuaded her to go and see the people herself, and as she pulled a blouse and skirt out of the dress basket, she asked ironically, licking her lips with the tip of her tongue:

"Would this suit her? You didn't happen to reckon up what size she might be?"

And as she was going out, she turned and said in a dissatisfied tone:

"I'll see what she's like first. If I don't fancy her, I won't bring her here at all."

Nor did she bring her—that evening.

The story of the Podnebesko couple was as simple and straightforward as a letter to a newspaper from a worker correspondent. They belonged to some little place near Belaya Tserkov, and went to school there. They were evacuated, but their parents were left behind. The boy joined the army at once, the girl joined the nurses' training courses. They were on different fronts and for a long time knew nothing of each other.

Then it turned out that neither their home nor their parents were left in Belaya Tserkov, their things had been entrusted to some people they knew well, but who had gone to Kustanay in Kazakhstan—and either they had not returned or perhaps returned so long ago that they had forgotten all about other people's belongings.

Later, it appeared, both the boy and the girl were wounded several times and were very ill; they were advised to live in the south and so, carefree, like all army people, they set out for the south. And here when everything, down to the trophy cigarette lighter, had been sold and Yuri had even given up smoking, and they had only one meal a day, they had been robbed, and to crown it all, Natasha was pregnant. Never had Yuri Podnebesko felt so dismayed as when he learned of this. They had no money to spare to telegraph for help, even if there had been anyone to turn to in their need.

It was then—miracles do happen!—that Voropayev turned up. A quarter of an hour later they understood, though they could hardly believe it, that everything was going to be first rate.

Next morning, Yuri and Natasha Podnebesko were standing, arm-in-arm, before the desk in the office of the collective farm management. The girl was barefoot and wearing Ogarnova's skirt, the boy had on Ogarnov's best breeches and house slippers, and leaned on a "cane", made of a rusty bayonet, mounted on a thorn stick.

Natasha volunteered for the hardest work, thinking that if she asked for lighter jobs, they would not want her. Yuri asked for nothing. He stood there, leaning a little over on his shorter leg, and with a painful smile explained half apologetically:

"I know very well that it's hard to find some use for me... So never mind me... You help Natashenka... She's in such a fix, you see...."

This was too much even for the suspicious and hardened Ogarnova. She gave a little stifled sob and emphatically struck her fist on the table.

Yuri was taken on as night watchman at the storage sheds, Natasha was put in the gardening team headed by Paussov. They had to get the seed ready, repair the hot-house frames and cart manure to them.

CHAPTER THREE

Voropayev had been away from the town for over a week now, and Sophia Ivanovna—Lena's mother—was getting worried about him. The idea that perhaps he had got nicely fixed up somewhere, or else—God forbid!—had tired of the house-repairing proposition, made her terribly anxious. Particularly as she had already undertaken a thing or two at her own discretion and Voropayev's expense, and she had been waiting impatiently to consult him. There were various rumours about the colonel.

She had spent his five hundred rubles on repairs to the roof, but then the collective farm roofer, Markel, had gone beyond the agreement and repairs worked out at nine hundred, so that she had to borrow four hundred. The gardener who had promised to plant half a dozen fig trees and three pomegranate bushes had let her down and done nothing in the time, though she had bought (on credit again) a lot of manure and was now in an awkward fix, not knowing whether to wait for the gardener or start to dig up the garden, spread the manure and lay it out as a vegetable garden without wasting any more time. But the worst of it all was—Voropayev's two rooms had not yet been plastered or the windows glazed, and the old woman was afraid that he might draw out of the agreement with her, and here she

had officially secured the house for him on a ten-year lease.

Twice she went to the Public Works Department to ask for plaster and was refused. Now her only course was to try Korytov again, but she did not like to do it, and Lena would not intercede in the house business on any account.

"No, mother, this is a business between you and him," she protested, with an exasperated shrug of her thin shoulders. "What have I got to do with it?"

"What do you mean? You have nothing to do with it!—we're his partners, aren't we? We took on the house together."

"You took it, mother. I'm only your tenant."

"What do you mean by saying I took it? We took it together."

"We didn't take anything together. And anyway, how will you prove you're sharing the house with him: the agreement's in his name, he can throw us out if he likes and say no more about it."

"Throw us out? Us?"

"Yes—us!"

"Then who'll look after his little boy? We came to an arrangement with him—the house is his, the labour's mine."

"Arrangement, indeed. And supposing he comes and brings a wife here—then we're out of it again."

"Ah, stop it, Lena, don't bother me with such talk. As if he was going to pick up a wife and bring her here straight away. A widower, with one leg—do you think he'll be snapped up in no time? Besides, the colonel isn't a bad sort, he does things decently, he won't let us down."

"There's no letting down about this, Mother. None whatever. He didn't take his oath to us that he wouldn't marry, did he?"

"You'd do better to see if you can find out where he's got to all this time. I daresay Korytov knows. He's left the house on my hands and goes flying off the Lord knows where!"

"What does it matter to you? If you are his partner, get on with the job, you needn't wait for him."

"Get on with the job, indeed!" the old woman grumbled. "Where's the money coming from for me to get on with it?—as if you didn't know anything about it!"

Still, she could not resist going on with it, and so she promised one of the collective farm women to knit her a sweater, got a little money in advance, persuaded the gardener into coming over, and against her better judgement planted perfectly useless things calculated to please the colonel: two rambling roses, three pomegranate bushes, five fig trees, two wistarias on either side of the future verandah, which was represented as yet by stakes, and three Alexandria muscatel vines for an arbour in front of this same verandah.

The old woman had no more than four hours' sleep a night now, and spent all her spare time in the yard which she dignified in turn by the name of garden, orchard, or grounds, according to the person she happened to be talking to about it. She made a path of crushed brick from the house to the gate, collected in the ruins of houses sheet iron, stone, white stove tiles, stove doors, flues and screens, two badly dented but more or less intact spittoons such as are usually seen in parks, flowerpots and fragments of window glass, which, with infinite patience, she put together into square panes for hot-house frames. The crowning achievement of her finds was a puppy, which she kept for the present in the house, but proposed to put into a future kennel as yet only marked by stakes near the gate that had not yet been hung.

That is, there was a gate. Torn off its hinges by the blast of a bomb, it was lying in someone's neglected garden, crushing the vines. Had there been a horse and cart or a car available, the old woman would have brought it home long ago. Afraid that someone else might appropriate it, she tied to it two wooden tabs, bearing the words "Colonel Voropayev's gate" written in indelible pencil. Even this did not seem sufficient guarantee of its safety; she begged a can of white paint from the collective farm, and with the skill of an experienced painter and decorator, inscribed in large letters "Voropayev's gate" across the green-painted iron rail at the bottom. She notified the local Soviet and the office of the management of the collective farm that this was her gate. Finally, meeting Korytov in the street one day, she told him, too, that she had found it and was afraid it might be stolen while the colonel was gadding about the country, God knew where.

Korytov gave a snort of surprise, laughed out loud, and said:

"That's a troublesome devil, there's no knowing what he'll do next," but promised to keep the gate in mind.

"The gate's one thing, but if you, Sophia Ivanovna, start stealing electric current, you'd better look out! You'll get into trouble."

The words touched her to the quick: she had forgotten about the light!

For a whole five days she roamed around neglected and so far untenanted houses in search of posts, found them, dug them up with remains of cables clinging to them, and with the help of Lena and two neighbours, dragged them home, and prepared pits for them though she could not set them up herself. Then she crossed herself, hoping she wouldn't be caught stealing. After that she thought of camouflaging them with earth to shield them from covetous eyes.

Even Lena felt sorry for her.

"If you have a regular power of attorney from Voropayev, you ought to go to the bank," she remarked once, with a faint knowing smile on her pale lips.

"What have I to go to the bank for?"

"They give subsidies there to those who are rebuilding."

"Well, what do you think of that scatterbrains for a partner!" the old woman gasped. "The one-legged devil didn't leave us a thing... How did you find out, Lena?"

"Korytov held a meeting, I heard," her daughter explained briefly. "There was talk of Voropayev at it...."

"You don't say? What were they talking about?"

"Well, what could they be talking about? They mentioned some gate or other... cursed him roundly... and now, whenever anything happens, the first thing they say to each other is: "There's your Voropayev's gate all over again!"

"Gate, did you say?" the old woman asked, going suddenly cold. "Well, they needn't do any such thing..." and she crossed herself unnoticed. "What am I to do now? Where am I to look for that devil?"

"Send him a telegram," Lena advised, yawning. "I'm going to bed a bit earlier tonight, mother: we're starting the Cherkassova movement tomorrov at five o'clock in the morning."

"What sort of a movement is that—so early in the morning? The things they think of—goodness me!"

"It's a movement to rebuild the town by our combined efforts... it's something like that extra work we used to do on Saturdays, only this time it means getting up at five and putting in a couple of hours before the day's work..." Lena explained to her mother as she undressed.

"You can't get your own home fixed up, and here you have to go and build other people's!" the old woman grumbled, but, seeing that there was nobody to listen to her, she began to think about sending a telegram.

She sent it off next morning to the *First of May* collective farm. It contained an injunction to the colonel to leave at once for the town so as to get the subsidy. For some time, she could not decide how to sign it. Should she sign simply her surname Zhurina, but he might not remember it? Should she sign "your partner"?—it sounded, well, not quite nice.

At last she decided that the most obvious thing to do was to sign it "your part-landlady Zhurina."

"A fool himself would guess who that is," she said.

Voropayev would certainly have guessed and would very likely have done something about it, to Sophia Ivanovna's great satisfaction, had he ever received her telegram.

From that memorable night when he succeeded in rousing the people, he felt for the first time since his return from the front the excitement, enjoyment and confidence that make a man happy and successful. He had forgotten everything in the world then: his son, uncomfortable, unsettled circumstances, the necessity for informing Korytov of the course of events, and he breathed freely again, enjoying the hazards of the offensive that, unexpectedly for himself, he found himself heading. He could not remember where he slept and what he ate, or whether he ever ate: he was hoarse, and hollow-eyed, but his head was clearer these days than it had been for a long time. He made speeches, wrote letters, talked of the events at the front, and all this taken together, somewhat chaotic, fatiguing and intoxicating, was happiness, and he wanted it to go on and on.

But at the end of the second week he stumbled on a steep path down a hill, and hurt his wounded leg and his chest badly.

The blood was pouring from his throat when they raised him from the ground and Varvara Ogarnova drove him at once to the *Kalinin* collective farm, where Dr. Komkov—that same practitioner whom Voropayev had spoken so sharply against at the meeting—was in charge.

Voropayev lay on two mattresses on the cart, watching the road apathetically. Ogarnova did not bother him with talk. She was really sorry for him and was afraid that she would cry if she started to talk to him. She saw him as a hero of desperate daring, a tragic figure, and furthermore, she had stood in awe of him since that never-to-be-forgotten night when the one-legged man had wrought so sudden a change in the tedium of their lives.

As she drove, she was thinking that all good people are short-lived and unfortunate, that very likely Voropayev would die soon of neglect, because, as her Victor told her, "the colonel will never be able to stand on his feet with all this work."

So Voropayev lay there, gazing aimlessly before him and trying not to think of anything. It had been gratifying that the whole collective farm had turned out to see him off (only it was a pity that it looked rather like a funeral procession), and he was really pleased with all that had been done, knowing that he would not be forgotten here for a long time.

Then he suddenly remembered an episode—it was when his "offensive" was at its height in the *First of May* collective farm: he was going through the woods, when he noticed from a distance a boy of about ten, playing. He had made himself a sort of speaker's platform and had set a bit of broken crockery on it, instead of the usual glass of water placed for the speaker. The youngster was making a fiery speech to himself and from time to time would pretend to take a sip from the broken vessel and shake his fist in exactly the same manner as Voropayev.

The little copse of pines straggling down the hill to the highway was sunlit, through and through, and every tree stood as though in a socket of light.

The boy stood in the shade and was distinctly seen from the path. He was playing alone, far from any house or people.

What was he telling his imaginary audience, whom was he defending or accusing? What was taking place in that young heart, when his small hand, after thumping the ledge in front of him, was stretched out before him like that of the bronze statue of Lenin?

Voropayev had an impulse to go up to the boy and ask him, but the remembrance of his own childhood, when grownups had only spoiled his games of make-believe, deterred him. Still, he could not resist glancing round several times. The little speaker was his own spiritual creation. He continued to watch him from a distance for some time.

The sockets of sunlight overflowed into little rivulets. They meandered among the trees and flowed downhill, merging in a clearing at the roadside and forming a pool of pale gold, but the child was no longer visible.

The recollection of this boy led Voropayev's thoughts back to his own son. Was Serezhka standing under some pine in Serebryany Bor[1], playing at speech-making, like this little Cossack?

And as soon as he called up in his mind's eye the thin figure, the pale face with its tiny nose, the shy smile, and attentive, somehow expectant look in the melancholy but good-natured eyes, he felt terribly sad. Oh, if he could only press his cheek to Serezhka's tousled head and fall into a happy, quiet slumber. But how was he to do that when he hadn't a corner to call his own, when he had not yet found his place in life, when he and his child were parted—perhaps for a long, long time—by circumstances beyond his power to change. Serezhka was being brought up by a wonderful family, where he was made much of, and this frightened Voropayev. He was jealous of other people's love for his son, of the comfort they were able to provide for him, of the presents and books that were given him—not by his father—and of everything that entered Serezhka's world without his knowledge.

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[1] Serebryany Bor—Silver Grove—a Moscow suburb.

His son must be drifting away from him, it seemed to him, and he feared this as the greatest misfortune. He had been in the habit of writing to the boy almost every week from the front, but not so often from the hospitals, and of late, while he had been kept busy going before various medical boards and commissions, he had stopped writing altogether, and only sent telegrams occasionally. Serezhka was dreaming passionately of going to the seaside, and his father's apparent neglect and preoccupation with other matters, must have grieved him. To the boy who had gone through the evacuation, borne his mother's death, the bombings and the constant anxiety for his father's safety; the all-absorbing love of the only one left to him—of his father—was a necessity like nourishment. Serezhka's love was too jealous, tormenting, suspicious, and serious for so young a child.

"What shall I do, what shall I do?" Voropayev muttered to himself, as he turned over in his mind the scenes of Serezhka's life in Moscow, and compared it with the life he was vaguely marking out for himself at the seaside.

How important the family was in people's lives!

"There must be frosts in Moscow, I daresay. People are freezing there most likely."

It was only down here in the south that spring did not vanish even in December but seemed to be continually invading winter and staying for a day or two, then to be routed as an intruder with clamour and ignominy by the winds; a week would pass and it would break through again, sprinkle snowdrops over the southern slopes, shape the buds of the kizil thorn, then flee and disperse itself into fogs and rain and sleet. The rains here, by the way, were more often than not rosy or carrotty pink from the sun shining through, and the sky was never cloudy for long. The clouds always scudded through the sky, as though afraid to be late, and the wind chased them on and on, from dawn to dusk.

Even when it was raining the sea had the blue of summer. One almost fancied that if you plunged your arm into it up to the elbow, your shirt sleeve would turn blue. Some days the sun was so hot, it was hard to breathe.

Bronze and withered foliage, not yet shed, rustled in the oak copses, the wind sang in the shaggy dark cypresses and spreading chestnuts, and the sad and delicate tops of the maples looked yellow but were not yet bare. It must be something like this in Hungary. But he could never draw the Hungarian landscape in imagination and he felt sorry that he had been put out of commission so soon, when there was still so much for him to see.

"Where are you taking me to, Varya?" he asked, raising himself on his elbow.

She gave a start and recoiled.

"Good Lord!.. I thought you were fast asleep! Where am I taking you to? I'm taking you to our doctor...."

"Turn right back. Turn back at once, I'm telling you."

"You'd better listen to me and not shout so loud. I'm the superior here—in this case, anyway—and I'm not turning round anywhere."

"What the devil do I want with your doctor? Remember what I said about him at the meeting."

"Yes, that you did, you certainly did, I remember," Ogarnova gabbed, somewhat taken aback. "But what do you want me to do then? Would you like me to take you to an old man I know very well, he can heal anybody?"

"All right, take me to the old man; in any case I'm long overdue at the *Kalinin* collective farm. Who is this old man, anyhow?"

"O-oh, he's a wonder!" Ogarnova assured him solemnly. "His name is Opanas Ivanovich Tsimbal, and he's come here from the Kuban, he's something like yourself—he has a hand in everything. He keeps bees, and runs a cottage laboratory and writes news for Moscow... One of these handy Cossacks who takes everything in his stride!"

"Tsimbal? Opanas Ivanovich? I can't believe it! You mean, a little fellow, a 'middling one', as the Circassians called him, with a bit of a rat-tailed beard?"

"The very man!" Ogarnova agreed, bursting out laughing. "You know everybody in the world, it seems...; Yes, that's right, the middling kind. And a string of decorations from one shoulder to the other... That's the fellow! So I'm to take you to him, am I?"

"Come on, let's be off! Why, he's like a father to me, if you want to know!"

"You don't say so? Why didn't you ever go and see him?"

"I hadn't the faintest notion he was here, I'd never have suspected it. What's he doing in these parts? What brought him here? You know, Ogarnova, he was famous in the Kuban."

"Were you fighting together or what?"

"Yes, we knocked about together. A splendid old chap, big-hearted, a very fine soul... Well, I never expected this, I'd never have guessed! I feel as if I was going home on leave, now I'm going to see Tsimbal... Although it isn't as if we'd ever spent a long time together, but still, you understand, we'll remember each other all our lives long. It is like that sometimes, you understand?"

She sighed and turned away.

"Do I understand?—you keep asking me... Why shouldn't I understand? Only, it's alright for you, men, but it's better for us women to forget the good we have known...".

Though she had said nothing definite Voropayev sensed that she might be speaking of himself.

"That's the way it is, you remember someone at times, and the tears come into your eyes when you think of him and you say to yourself: there was nothing between me and him, after all, just a mutual sympathy, just a dream, maybe," she wound up, again turning her back to him as she lashed the horse.

The horse put on speed and Voropayev was jolted on to his back. He felt an involuntary satisfaction that the conversation was ended. His heart was with Tsimbal, and the things they had gone through together. And now the life of those two war years in the Caucasus, in the woods on the River Belaya and beyond Maikop, then near Novorossiisk, and the ruins of Taman—rose before his mind's eye as a single picture.

It was the spring of 1942, in the Kuban district.

Volunteers were pouring in and Voropayev was sent to one of the Cossack meetings that sprang up spontaneously and brought thousands of patriotic men and women into the ranks.

The mud was incredible, catastrophic. If a child fell in this black-soil mire, you couldn't pull it out. Guns, ammunition, wounded men were stranded for weeks on the deserted roads.

At daybreak on one of those accursed dead-still mornings, Opanas Ivanovich Tsimbal, a horticulturist, the local Michurin, headed the "grandfather's movement", as it was called.

The village lying in the hollow of the hills was still in deep shade and seemed asleep, though the brows of the hills were vaguely gilded by the low, almost horizontal sunbeams that as yet kept close to earth and did not rise to the roofs.

The streets, swimming in liquid mud, were deserted, but loud voices and music carried from the *maidan*—the market square.

Out in the open, among the loaded country carts, lorries, bullock carts and saddle horses, stood a crowd of Cossack women in gay clothes, with their skirts tucked up out of the dirt, children carrying red flags and Cossacks in their regulation tight-waisted Circassian coats, carrying arms and in many cases wearing the old military decoration, the St. George Cross. The mud splashed them above their knees, but nobody paid any attention to it. The meeting was over. They were saying goodbye. At one end of the place a song was sung, at the other end a lament was intoned. The bugle call of the Young Pioneers' detachment drowned someone's laughter. A drum beat diffidently, as a child would beat it. The men who were leaving called out to their relatives.

It was an old Cossack settlement, with a good history behind it.

The old market place, trampled by generations, had seen much in its day and held memories of the last of the renowned Zaporozhie Cossacks. Many tears had been shed here in the past. Once it had been filled with the Cossacks armed by Potemkin for the terrible campaign against the Turks on the Danube. From here the settlement had sent the flower of its youth to serve under Suvorov in the Kuban corps in the west, later to Khrulev to fight at Sevastopol, and then to Skobeliev to fight at Plevna. Their grandchildren had said their last farewell to home here when they hurried away, now to Mukden, now to Galicia to serve under Brussilov.

It was here they had assembled to fight under Budyonny for the Soviets or to set out for the Taman Army that

flowed, a deathless iron flood, along the shores of their sea;

Many a time had the grand and mournful Cossack ballads been sung here, many a time had the Cossacks parted from their families forever, but the spirit of that intrepid Cossack restlessness, without which they find the world a dull place, had unfailingly soared above the sadness of parting.

There seemed to be plenty of everything, and yet, once the call was heard, the wanderlust was there, the Cossack could not be dissuaded or held back—it was farewell to the dear home country.

And it was the same in this war. They wept and danced. They embraced and sang. They made speeches and did stunt riding, sending showers of liquid mud over the spectators, and there was something gay and carefree about the whole thing.

Among those who mounted the horses were greybeards, youths, girls, men wearing horn-rimmed glasses and city boots, and it was not easy to tell at first who was departing and who was seeing them off.

In that picturesque crowd Voropayev had singled out at first glance a short grizzled Cossack who had a neat professorial beard, wore gold-rimmed glasses and rode his horse well. Beside him—mounted too—was a rather round-shouldered girl, armed and wearing a Cossack coat. Her thin plait of hair stuck out from under the black Kuban sheepskin cap.

The couple were Tsimbal and his granddaughter Ksenia, afterwards one of the best scouts among the partisans.

Voropayev joined them and the detachment moved off to the accompaniment of singing and shouting of the villagers. Beyond the pasture meadow they were deafened by the resounding blows of hammers on anvils: ten or a dozen blacksmiths armed with hammers large and small were beating out, hammer and clink, a curious chime—their tribute to those going off to war.

With great dignity Tsimbal rode up to them and, with an air that had nothing of the horticulturist about it and suggested that he had done nothing but command battles all his life, remarked with a grin:

"Isn't the day long enough for you to do your hammering in?"

"Both the day and the night are too short all on account of you, Ivanych," was the answer, evidently prepared beforehand, of the head smith with the black singed beard, as he thrust the tongs into the flames and drew out a bar of red-hot metal, the curve of which looked like that of a sabre.

"How's this?"

Tsimbal eyed it and made a sucking sound with a corner of his mouth.

"What is it—a carriage spring or a blade?"

The smiths laughed. Throwing the bar back into the fire, the elder smith said enviously:

"We wouldn't grudge you, Ivanych, a blade from a museum, only we can't forge six thousand out of air, can we?"

"The Kuban wants more than six thousand to defend it," Tsimbal replied weightily. "See that you, smiths, give us fifty thousand."

"Let's have a look at your own blade," the smith said and, with a movement that was languid yet precise and in its sweep almost disproportionate to the slight figure, Tsimbal drew his own blade.

Wiping his fingers on his leather apron, the smith took the weapon from him as delicately as though it were a thin slice of melon.

"What did I tell you?—a museum piece!" he exclaimed. "I can see that with half an eye. Look at the blue of it! This'll be real genuine Khorassan, I don't doubt?"

"Ah, devil only knows, it may be Khorassan, for that matter," Tsimbal said. "It comes from that museum, my friend, that is called the city of Erzerum." He took back the weapon carelessly and sheathed it, his whole body thrown back, and gave rein to his horse and such youthful audacity, such beauty were revealed in the elusively rapid and easy movements—as though they cost him no effort—that it seemed they were not done one by one but were sung like a song.

A month or six weeks later in the Crimea, when German tanks were lumbering in from Kerch and the Cossacks of the cavalry division in which Tsimbal was serving, charged the tanks, Voropayev met him in a sad and disastrous state.

The battle had just ended—unsuccessfully. The retreat was about to begin. Wounded were being hastily loaded onto vehicles, the horses that could be spared were harnessed to the guns, and it was being decided, with alarming impunity, what part of the equipment might be left behind. Voropayev, who had happened to get into the stream of Cossacks, suddenly heard close by a familiar voice sounding a note of enthusiasm wholly out of tune with current events.

"Very smart bit of work—that!" the voice was saying. "Did you see how Suprun took two tommy guns? He's a fine chap, I tell you! Nikifor, run to the regimental commander... Hey, not you, not you—Nikifor, I mean. Yes, he's a handsome Cossack, the blackguard!.. Why aren't you carrying anything? Here, take a case on your shoulder... Hey,there, soldier, you,. wounded? What, have you lost your tongue? Speak up! What do you need? Stretcher bearers, this way, this way!.. What's the sense of feeding at this hour?.. Stuff and nonsense!.. The horse has his own timetable... Now then—all together! Better to lose your shirt than to lose heart!"

Voropayev glanced out of his car and, as he had expected, saw Tsimbal. Out of all that subdued crowd of Cossacks, among whom there were many wounded, and a still larger number worried over their belongings and petty troubles, bringing things from somewhere and not knowing where to put them, Tsimbal alone knew just what to do. He ordered the wounded soldier to lie down in the two-wheeled ambulance cart, and the one who was unhurt to load sacks of grain, he sent the horses on ahead, and the cars back, permitting some materials to be left, unloaded, and the others to be taken along at all costs.

At present he was almost unrecognizable; the neat professorial beard was all awry like a dull grey cock's comb, as though he had slept on it, his smart black sheepskin cap looked soiled, its scarlet top faded to a rust colour, his coat, torn and unmended, held together with safety pins.

Ksenia was with him, and Voropayev beckoned her to him.

"Oh, we're in such terrible trouble!" the girl whispered, trembling and glancing round every moment at her grandfather. "My father, Grigori, has been killed... Torn to pieces... They had to pick up the body bit by bit."

"When?—today?"

"Yes, this morning. We're taking him with us. You don't happen to know where we could bury him? Or is this ground to be German? And where are we to take him? Or shall we cast him into the sea?.. We're in a terrible plight—don't desert us, for God's sake!"

He named her a small state-farm hamlet where the burial might take place, and advised that the retreat should be made to that spot, where he promised to meet them.

Shortly before dawn he met Tsimbal again; the old man, the girl and a young man, who was a distant relative, rode up.

Voropayev was surprised not to see the body of the dead, and then he guessed that the remains were wrapped in the heavy black cloak behind the old man's saddle. The grave had already been dug at Voropayev's orders.

Weeping soundlessly, Ksenia unfastened the bundle from the saddle, and carrying all that remained of her father's body in her arms like a baby swaddled in a blanket, went stumblingly towards the grave and laid down her burden on the brink.

Five more men rode up and one asked in muffled tones:

"Here?"

"Yes, here," Tsimbal replied firmly.

The thud of hooves went on unceasingly. Men were arriving in an unbroken stream.

"Let me now, Cossacks, consign my only son to the earth!" the old man called out suddenly in a high-pitched, singsong voice. "According to the old tradition, where a Cossack fell, a high mound arose, God grant us the same honour when our time comes. I lay him down in the grave as I might lie down myself, Cossacks, I bury him as I am being buried myself!.. Aye, and I am burying myself, it's true.

"For there'll be neither sleep nor rest, nor reward, nor punishment, nor wounds, nor sickness for me, while the Germans are here in our steppe. We'll hound the Germans out, even if we have to cover the whole steppe from end to end with burial mounds. Now... the night waits for none, the day's on its way... Farewell, Grigori... Everything is right, my boy, save one thing—

that a father should outlive his son. . . So we bow low to the ground in respect to you, Grigori Opanasovich Tsimbal, your father and your daughter, Ksenia, and your fighting comrades, the Cossacks. And you, my friend, forgive us."

The Cossacks snuffled. Someone burst into wild sobbing like a woman.

Choked with emotion, Voropayev said:

"If he's to have a burial mound, he shall have it. . . A Cossack's glory must be upheld."

And when the bundle in the black Cossack cloak was laid in the bottom of the grave and old Tsimbal flung in the first handful of earth on his son's remains, the people pressed forward. And now there were not only Cossacks shovelling the earth, but strangers too—infantrymen, motorcyclists, civilians who were running from the enemy, and towards morning a well made, though not very high mound had arisen on the spot.

An old man living nearby promised to plant flowers or bushes on it and lay green turf on the sides.

Then the men rode away, never thinking they would ever meet again.

But Voropayev heard a great deal about Tsimbal, who was fighting in the partisan detachments, and Ksenia, who died a heroic death, avenging her father.

Much later, after the taking of Taman, Voropayev happened to be passing through Tsimbal's native place and made enquiries as to the fate of the old man.

"He's gone from us—has Opanas," a withered old Cossack woman informed him, "and the ashes of his home he scattered to the four winds."

And she described how the lonely old man had wept over the burnt remains of his once famous cottage, where he had been visited by members of the Academy of Sciences, a cottage with which the lives of thousands of those who work in the vineyards of the Kuban were bound up. Now that he had lost his young folks, Tsimbal had left his native place for good and no one knew where he had gone.

The *Kalinin* collective farm was situated on the southern slope of a hill that swept down to the sea. Houses were built along the crest, lower down vineyards and tobacco plantations made a picturesque and colourful pattern, bordered along the gully by young thorn bushes, kizil and briar roses. In the clear bright evening air people could be seen for miles and Voropayev at once recognized Opanas in the straight graceful figure of a grey-haired man, wearing a padded cotton coat with a Caucasian belt. He wielded the spade with the native grace and ease of the Caucasian.

"Call him, will you?" Voropayev asked Ogarnova.

"Why should I when we've got here already?" the woman protested reasonably enough, but, seeing that the sick man was struggling to raise himself on his arms, she put two fingers in her mouth and gave such a piercing whistle that Voropayev involuntarily winced.

The old man turned. Voropayev waved to him. The other noticed it, and raised his sheepskin cap with a leisurely, dignified movement.

"He's recognized me, Ogarnova, you can see he's recognized me, can't you?"

"Maybe he has, who knows?" she replied indifferently. "He's standing there rolling himself a cigarette, and he hasn't made any other sign."

"Why, surely, you saw him wave his hand to me?"

"Maybe he did, at that," she said, with a sigh. "But that's not much. Why do you get excited, are you fond of everyone who waves his hand to you? I didn't know, or else I might. . . ."

"What might you have done?"

"Oh, I don't know—I'd have done something. . . But it's no use talking now. . . I suppose you'll start hugging and kissing now? Well, I'll have a look at you, that I will."

She seemed to have put a spell on them. When the cart pulled up and Opanas, straight and slight, went up quickly to Voropayev, who struggled to his knees, they did not embrace, but only looked long into each other's eyes and made no sound except to clear their throats.

"I heard about you. . . I heard all about your heroic doings," Opanas Ivanovich broke the silence at last. "Leading the collective farms to the attack like battalions, are you? Look out, brother, see you don't get into trouble. . . This isn't war. . . ."

"Well, you can see for yourself, Opanas Ivanovich, I'm in deep enough as it is. . . I'm out of commission. . . ."

"Oh, that's nothing much. We'll soon fix that up. I've gone back to my old weeds and herbs again," Opanas Ivanovich said casually, as he helped Voropayev to alight from the cart and with his arm around the sick man, led him into the house.

Ogarnova carried in a basket and his knapsack.

"There are eggs in here—from the farm," she said, severely. "It's what you call—extra invalid rations."

The basket contained eight eggs and a bag with about five pounds of flour.

"What's all this about extra rations?" Opanas demanded. "They're not wanted here. I can give my visitors enough to eat, I hope, without any subsidies. Take those eggs of yours back again, take them away at once, I tell you!"

"Who are you shouting at? Comrade Colonel's got sick all because of us, and so we're answerable for him."

"Take 'em away, I say, else I'll break them before your eyes, do you hear?" and Tsimbal raised his foot above the basket with such fierce determination that Ogarnova snatched it up in alarm.

Taking advantage of the old man's attention being distracted, Voropayev watched him, admiring the picturesque figure that had not changed at all since they had last met. His grey hair escaped as crisply and belligerently as ever from under the red-topped sheepskin Kuban cap giving him a dashing touch. The lines on the clean-shaven face emphasized the seriousness of his smile, ready at any moment to broaden, unrestrained even by the gravity of the steel-rimmed glasses with their rusted frames, wound at the ends with a thick roll of black thread.

"I never expected to meet you here, Opanas Ivanovich. Have you been in these parts long?"

"I came with the army. I was the first to land at Kerch. The first to bring greetings to Grigori from the Kuban. I gave my word, then, if you remember, to go and live where his grave was, but fate wouldn't have it so. . . The mound wasn't anywhere to be seen, and the place had altered more than any living man can alter. War ploughed it over till you'd never be able to find a thing. So then I made up my mind to come and live here, where I'd be a neighbour of his, anyway."

Standing in the middle of the room, they plunged into talk about local affairs at once.

"Opanas Ivanovich, what's going on here? All the local people are aiming to clear out and settle somewhere else. What's up?"

"Listen, would you like to start life anew in the place where your wife and children had been killed? Hardly, I think, eh? Everything would remind you of the old days. Think!—would that be easy for you? The wealth we built up these twenty-five years—all gone, nothing but ashes. Why, you'd do more weeping than working, I think."

"So the idea is to go away to a new place, and, having forgotten the past, work better, is that it?"

"Exactly."

"But surely you've heard how it was at the *First of May* farm? They were new folks, and still they wouldn't do a stroke of work."

"You'll see for yourself in time."

While they were talking, the old man was laying the table quickly, setting out on the oilcloth two bottles with brandy made after recipes of his own, cleaning a thin smoked herring brought from the Kuban, and putting on the kettle. His deft,. easy movements again aroused Voropayev's admiration. But still he was not the man he had been. The body was still sound but the spirit was weary, that was plain.

Ogarnova sat primly silent, with her hands clasped between her knees.

"You're like a court examiner," she remarked at last to Voropayev in a displeased tone, "that's why you're so thin and ailing—because you're so inquisitive."

She turned her mischievous, slanting eyes on Voropayev.

"What are you worrying the old folks for, you ought to ask the young ones. . . I'll give you all the information myself, no need to ask me. Want to know why I came to the Crimea?" she demanded with a bitter challenge in her tone. "It was all because of Victor, my man. He is very poorly, and shaky, as you know, and the doctor kept at me all the time—about the climate, give him a change of air and all the rest of it. And it so happened that a delegate came back and he told us there was no winter here, it was a regular paradise, two crops of figs

a summer. I threw up everything, sold my belongings for a song, and started off here. There's my story for you. As for our Kapitsa—why do you think he came? His sons were all killed, and he didn't want to stay in the old nest without them—that's why he came. And Gurov? Gurov's a lazy fellow. He says: 'I think I'll have a little trip somewhere, I've never been anywhere in my life.' As for Rybakov—that's the shoemaker—there is work for him anywhere. So now you see?"

Warming to her subject, she drew for him a rapid, desperate and angry picture of all that had moved people when they set out for the unknown, and the whole grew clearer and more understandable to Voropayev. They had all, of course, been roused by the war. The front was not only on the Danube: it was in the ashes of the Cossack villages, the ruins of domestic security, in the search for a happiness that was more essential now than bread.

A hand fumbled at the door and Dr. Komkov ventured cautiously into the cottage.

He glanced at Ogarnova, who, to everyone's surprise, had fallen silent, and then she hastily said goodbye and went out. They could hear her angrily urging on the drowsy horse outside the gate.

Komkov was tall, well-built, and beaming, even when he was silent, as though he knew something really funny, and was keeping it to himself.

"I'm . . . that doctor, my name's Komkov," he introduced himself, "the doctor you were pleased to abuse at the collective farm meeting. So now we know each other."

Voropayev held out his hand without any particular pleasure.

"If I'd had to deal out at the front with a defender of humanity who was like you—I'd have shot him without thinking twice about it! And I wouldn't have been sorry for it, either!"

"And if you happened to be under my hands on the operating table, I would have started operating on you, dear Colonel, in two minutes, without even asking your name. Do you care to listen to my explanations or are you convinced of my guilt beforehand?"

"Yes, perfectly, and I don't need any explanations."

"All the better! I was afraid you were going to start a discussion about it."

Paying no heed to Voropayev's rising irritation, he pulled out some slips of paper from his pocket.

"I'll fill in a hospital form for you, and ask you to express your opinion about me, if you want to, at the next collective farm meeting. It'll be very much to the point."

Voropayev waved him away.

"You're thinking of giving me treatment, so far as I can see?"

"You're not lacking in certain powers of observation. That's just what I'm going to do. I won't conceal the fact."

The tone in which Komkov said this held so much dignity and confidence that Voropayev looked him over with some curiosity. He liked confident and firm people.

The young doctor bore himself like a man who knew something of the utmost importance, that the rest of the world had no notion of, and was inclined to be rather overbearing (after the manner of youth), but it suited him.

"I can perfectly well imagine, comrade patient, that you're fairly spoiled by all the medical notables of the capital, and I have no illusions on that score," he declared, smiling first all over his face, then with the eyes alone, then with the corner of his mouth. "A man who has been treated by even a very bad doctor in the capital considers that he can get nobody but horse doctors to attend to him in the provinces. I'm afraid you'll have to get rid of this point of view. Your illness is not regarded as either romantic or complicated nowadays. In fact, it's very simple. Any qualified doctor can treat you. It requires a simple remedy—fresh air. As much as you can possibly get—waking or sleeping. You have to ventilate yourself, cleanse every cell in your body with fresh air. Move and breathe. Understand? Eat in the open air. And of course, sleep in the open air. On damp days overcome the dampness by extra activity. No lying down. If you are not in a fit state to walk, do gymnastics in bed. And, above all, keep busy. Tuberculosis is overcome by keeping busy. It is not necessary to indulge in daydreams—that is weakening—you must have your own work to do. And finally, discipline. Thwart every impulse that the illness suggests.

Do you feel you want to lie idly and aimlessly in bed? Do the opposite. Want to cough? Refrain. Your head goes round? Exert your will to overcome the inclination. Turn the illness upside down. The most powerful remedy for tuberculosis—one that has never let down any doctor or patient yet—is will power. Tuberculosis is a will test illness, bear it in mind."

"It doesn't strike you, by any chance, that your advice savours somewhat of a textbook for first-year students?" Voropayev asked almost cheerfully.

"Possibly. All the great truths are simple," Komkov replied coolly. "When Pirogov introduced the principle of sorting out wounded patients and forming teams of convalescents, people said he was taking the bread out of the mouths of witch doctors, and Vishnevsky, who invented a miracle-working ointment and taught us the blockade method, is still spoken of as a doctor's dresser, a first-aid man. Better to be a first-aid man with the attributes of a genius than a genius with the outlook of a horse-doctor."

"Well said! Here's one for you!"

The young doctor passed his hand over his thick coarse blond hair and pretended he had not heard the praise.

Voropayev felt a great desire to be treated by this young doctor who was not tormented by doubts as to the efficacy of his methods. Komkov was masterful and that was sure to have an effect on his patients.

"Let's see, now, you must begin by taking the air in unlimited doses. Learn to breathe. Get used to taking air as you take food, manipulating it in your larynx like food and savouring its taste and smell, enjoy it thoroughly, like a gourmand, don't be indifferent to it. Learn to prepare this food to your taste. You have a fine choice. Drink in only clean moving air. Air that has stood for a couple of hours in a closed room is poison for you. Follow the open-door policy in regard to your illness."

Komkov stood up and bowed, without holding out his hand. Tsimbal did not try to delay him, but saw him out to the gate, and returning, scratched his grey head ruefully.

"So my idea is not a success, after all. I called him here because I wanted you to be friends. He's got a great mind, that young fellow. And he's energetic, too. Typhus and cholera—he thinks no more of them than you and I of drinking a glass of vodka. Here we call him nothing less than a Minister of Health. And you treat him as if he was a little lad whose ears you'd like to box!"

"You're on his side, are you, Opanas Ivanovich?" Voropayev asked, already regretting that he had been so churlish to the nice young doctor, who, like all young specialists, was probably very touchy and had some new theory of his own, an interesting one, like everything new and young.

"How could I help but be on his side? That man's a partisan through and through. He does wonders with people. They come to him from places a hundred miles away. He escaped from the Gestapo and spent three months in a cellar in Sevastopol. That's a real doctor, I tell you! Your ailment is only a trifle to him—he'd cure you in no time."

"Seems a bit too young," Voropayev said, for the sake of saying something: he felt ashamed.

Komkov's frank, animated face, the eloquent play of his smile, rose before him, a living reproach. Had he been able to get up and run after him, Voropayev would have done so, but he did not want to give in to Tsimbal.

"Conceited young chap!" he said.

Opanas Ivanovich took hold of the head of the bed on which Voropayev was half-reclining, and ran it out over the threshold into the yard.

"You can freeze there, I won't let you into the house till Komkov tells me to!"

CHAPTER FOUR

Voropayev was struck by the chaos of contradictions on the home front, and as a result of the constant tension in which he strove to grasp as quickly as possible everything new that obtruded itself on his bewildered consciousness, he felt an infinite weariness, though he rested for days on end in Tsimbal's yard.

When the weather was not foggy or rainy, his bed was wheeled into the little yard that lay in front of the house.

On the west lay Chumandrin's state farm, with its houses somewhat below the highway, and all facing south. At

sunset the windows were a blinding molten gold.

Nearer, at the mouth of the gorge, the houses of the *First of May* collective farm clustered. Watching through field glasses on clear days, one might almost follow the moods of the people working in the vineyards, and hear from the canteen on the outskirts, the echo of songs and the faint sounds of the accordion.

On the east could be seen the *Mikoyan* tobacco plantations, the grounds of the children's sanatorium and a lineman's shack, and high behind this, smoke curled into the sky when stoves were heated in the forestry buildings. High up, somewhere near the crest of the hills, one could just discern the meteorological station, where Zarubin lived all alone.

In the old park that lay between the *Kalinin* collective farm and the seashore, the attractive buildings of the sanatoria stood. They now lay in ruins: the park was overgrown, neglected, and had reverted to the wilderness.

Voropayev was aware of the *Kalinin* collective farm, hidden by the walls of Tsimbal's yard, only through the voices that carried to his ears. The Eagle Peak dominated the farmlands and the whole stretch of seashore as far as the eye could reach. Its reddish grey sides, steep and overhanging like a wall, bore a faint resemblance to ancient edifices.

The horny, gnarled branches of the tamarisk, motionless in even the stormiest gust, looked like fossils. Above the peak, quivering as they dissolved, swaying in thin air, raced beautiful clouds, apparently as dry as smoke.

In the bluish-white distance where the farthest visible mountain merged into the mist, it seemed that twilight prevailed or rain fell all day long, but this was only one of the impish tricks of perspective.

Up to then Voropayev had never been alone for very long with nature and at first it made him feel as uncomfortable as he would have felt with a woman who was almost a stranger and with whom he had to spend the livelong day.

After a while he grew accustomed to his new life and it held his interest.

He lay like some inanimate object possessing sight, hearing and memory, and thus becoming part of nature surrounding him.

The birds ceased to fear a man who lay so quiet and could whistle such sweet tunes. He always had crumbs and apple cores and the like near him.

There were different birds, local and passerine. Some looked to Voropayev like casualties—one or two had a limp, others suffered from a twitching, still others were obviously deaf and unnaturally careless of danger.

Birds that the war had driven from their own haunts and that had flown here in the tumult were refugees. Their efforts to mix with local birds, though of other species, seemed so human that Voropayev was astonished by it.

The hens were clearly dismayed when a tiny hedge warbler joined their family. She was so bold in sharing the domestic poultry's life, and so smart and fearless in keeping out of the rooster's way, that it was a pleasure to watch her. But late one evening, when the moon glowed behind the clouds like an ember in ashes, Voropayev heard the loud twittering of the solitary hedge warbler, talking to herself, as it were, while she darted to and fro over house and yard. At night she wanted to be herself.

Another time—it was in the morning—he noticed a thrush flitting through the yard, bowing and nodding as he went, and before taking flight, performing a little defiant dance on a smooth cobblestone. That is what Voropayev himself would have done, probably, had he been alone and able to fly.

The thrush got used to him very quickly and soon became accustomed snatching crumbs almost from his hand. Once he perched on the edge of the roof and, jerking as though he felt tight under the wings, he suddenly burst out singing, peeking sideways at Voropayev from time to time to see how he liked it. First he sang like a nightingale, then like a lark, then like a quail, keeping a watchful eye on the man, expecting him to say something. In fact, the thrush behaved exactly like a person who knows several languages and wants to start a conversation with a taciturn fellow-traveller.

"Perhaps he isn't singing, he may be composing?" the thought struck Voropayev and for an instant he even believed his own invention, until he laughed at

himself—the things one came to think of in solitude!

The thought recurred, however, when he saw a starling from its perch on a bough trying to miaow down a cat, and again when two larks soaring in a wide spiral into the air, bore their song aloft to such a height that it fairly took Voropayev's breath away, as he strained to catch the echoes of the trilling in what seemed to be two voices, intertwining in the blue.

Yet the birds could not soothe him. They only made his sense of ominous solitude all the keener. Once he rummaged in his satchel and with waxen yellowish green, trembling hands, extracted his notes on the subject of "The Moral Element in War," a study he had once considered of serious importance.

His thoughts in the first days of war were strangely like those that troubled him today.

"Strictly speaking," he wrote at Elnya in the summer of 1941, "physical suffering does not exist. Suffering always contains an element of consciousness, and therefore the higher and better organized the consciousness is, the easier it is to overcome pain."

In the autumn of 1941, in Novgorod, a seriously-wounded engineer remarked to Voropayev, who was battalion commissar at the time:

"In any event, remember, Comrade Commissar, the words of Seneca: 'Man is unhappy only in so far as he considers himself unhappy.'"

"So in your opinion," Voropayev asked, "bravery also exists in so far—and so on?"

"Of course," said the engineer. "There are no ready-made cowards or heroes—everyone becomes what it is easiest for him to become."

In winter, 1941, Lev Mikhailovich Dovator, the Cossack general, said the same in a conversation with Voropayev.

"Cowardice is easily cured: all that is necessary is to assure the coward that he is a plucky chap. When you've done that—you can safely trust him. Courage is a thoroughly realized sense of responsibility."

A year later, when he was in an underground hospital in Kerch, a surgeon, Lunkevich by name, who had just been wounded by a shell splinter, said to Voropayev who was being prepared for an operation made necessary by complications following a chest wound.

"Look here, Commissar, pain is easily endured if you do not increase it by dwelling on it. Cheer up, tell yourself—it's nothing, it'll be gone in a minute. And you'll see how the pain will subside. You see what I mean?"

"Yes, I see, doctor," Voropayev had said. "I'm not complaining, I'm only afraid that you're going to operate on me just now while you're weak and haven't the strength, perhaps."

"Well, I have no fear on your account, even if you're very seriously wounded. I am not afraid that you won't pull through, that you'll die on the operating table. I know you'll pull through. And so will I. We're going to make a good job of it."

Another entry in the diary: "They say that according to Lagrange the victors' wounds heal sooner."

But he did not need Lagrange to point that out—his own experience was sufficient evidence of this. He had been in the offensive at Bucharest before his Kishinev wound had quite healed.

Even now, whenever he remembered these things, he got goose flesh, the blood throbbed in his temples and he could feel the sap of life rising in him.

How long ago it all seemed now, way back in his youth almost, yet the actual time that had passed was very short.

He had walked on his own two legs in those days, and had been spry and gay.

It was a bright, rather windy day—a lot of dust blowing—and he had raced into the city on a tank with his scouts and then remained alone. His face, blotched with the countless lipstick kisses of perfumed and perspiring Rumanian women, must have looked frivolous and ridiculous. As a matter of fact, he ought to have stayed in hospital but how could anyone lie in bed on the day of entry into a dazzlingly white city, seething with excitement. He did not sit down till late at night, but wandered about the streets, talking to people, explaining things or simply embracing someone, wordlessly, and his Kishinev wound healed as though treated with some magic balm. His next wound—it was a random shot after Bucharest—took an inexplicably long time to heal and festered almost until Sophia, though

it was not so serious as the earlier wound.

But when he was helped, leaning on his stick, out of the staff car in the centre of the Bulgarian capital and, without waiting for others to salute and embrace him, he himself started to embrace everyone he met, something contracted in the wound and it went numb. He could hardly keep on his feet, his head went round, his fingers were cold as ice—so fatigued was he with the day, for he had spoken for hours in the squares, the barracks, and even from the pulpit of a church, into which he had been carried aloft by the crowd. Standing beside the priest, he had spoken of Stalin, Russia, and the Slavs, as though he himself was no less than a thousand years old and had many a time nailed his shield on the gates of Tsargrad.[1]

And with every fresh shout of "Zhivio!" his wound seemed to knit together. Three days later only a narrow scar remained. Aye, days like these come once or perhaps twice in a century, they have the power of healing, they work miracles and happy the man to whose lot they fell. . . .

Happiness such as this could never be repeated, and never again in his short span of life would he witness events so great. But they did occur, and one had to take advantage of them, for a man could not carry them with him into the grave—could not bear away so much that was wonderful and beautiful, without making some effort to hand on the joy of living to those who were to live after him.

The thought of death visited him more and more often, and he was saddened and alarmed by the realization that just now, when the war was about to end and a splendid life about to begin, he, Voropayev—if he ever lived to see that day—would be more dead than alive, and in no circumstances fit to take part in the creation of the post-war life in the front rank, as he had done before the war.

Yes, he had helped to build up the pre-war life and was proud of it in his heart, but this new life, which was to be stronger and more spacious, would hardly be built by him. And how much had been planned, how much begun! But life is like that, devil take it! It had formerly seemed to him that mountains and forests of untasted days lay ahead. Yet the forests turned out to be thin and sparse, the mountains far from high.

It was not the wound, nor the diseased lung that troubled him—it was exasperation at the sense of not being needed. He was no longer marching with life, but was lagging behind. He thought of a great many things and regretted much. Nothing could put new hope into him.

Komkov was called in again. He regarded medical advice as an urgency case, in which doctor and patient should take part on an equal footing.

"Solitude is hard to bear, isn't it?" he asked condescendingly, when he had listened to all the complaints, prayers, fears, imaginary forebodings of his restless, fretting patient. "There's no good in probing morbidly into your own emotions. Better see people."

Next day two girls, Svetlana Chirikova and Anya Stupina, who had returned only a month ago from German captivity, were seated by Voropayev's bedside. They were intending to set out for the Far East and had come to him for advice.

They had both been born and bred here on the *Kalinin* collective farm, were members of the Komsomol and first-class workers who had been highly praised more than once in the local papers. Anya Stupina was a dark, narrow-shouldered girl with the dull pallor of one who suffers from malaria. Before the war she had been the head of the local Komsomol organization, played in amateur theatricals, was regarded as the best sharp shooter on the farm and had made two parachute jumps in the regional centre, beating some record or other at the time.

She was of Cossack blood and although she looked a mere child despite her seventeen years, she possessed that outward appearance typical of the Cossack women which does not change from childhood to old age.

The great-great-granddaughters of the fighting women of the Zaporozhie

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[1] Voropayev here refers to an incident which occurred in the year 907, during the campaign by Oleg, Prince of Kiev against the Byzantine Greeks; according to the Chronicles this campaign ended by Oleg nailing his shield on the gates of Constantinople which the Russians called Tsargrad.

Cossacks had acquired in the Caucasus darker eyes and hair and the spare grace of the mountain women. The Cossack women do not practise either manners or gait, both are formed naturally and freely, without their owners' will, but what amazing elegance, what charming simplicity there is in their every movement, even when nobody is watching them.

This charm and beauty were particularly evident in Stupina's appearance. Though rather angular and not very tall, with a face that was not striking at first glance, she attracted the eye by her general well-knit look, the harmony of her figure.

Svetlana Chirikova was the opposite, a plump girl with a full figure, thick light hair wound around her large head in braids, the glance of her big grey eyes betraying a hint of fun and a sly strength.

Voropayev asked the girls to tell him all that had happened to them.

"I'm not inquisitive as a rule, you can see that, but tell me all about it without keeping anything back."

"The main thing?" Anya Stupina asked him, for some reason, and he noticed that Svetlana caught her by the shoulder and pressed it with her big white fingers with their narrow tapering nails.

"If it's to be a heart-to-heart talk," Anya began, "then I'll tell you this: I went to Germany voluntarily, as you might call it. And what else could I have done?" she cried, foreseeing objections, unvoiced though they might be. "My girls from the Komsomol organization were taken away to Germany under the labour recruiting system: Sonya Shutova, Larissa Pronina, Svetlana Chirikova, Nadya Protsenko, and all of them, every one. Not to mention all our lads, I was thinking only of the girls that time. Our lads managed to run away, some to the woods, some to the partisans—it was easier for them. So then my whole Komsomol organization was disappearing, and what was I to do? Stay at home? I volunteered to go with them. Why? I'll explain it all in a minute. What was I thinking of in those days? I thought a revolution would be sure to break out in Germany and then we'd come in very useful there. Nothing of the kind happened, although so many of our bunch who had been recruited joined the partisans afterwards—anyone can tell you that. I nearly got to the Czechs myself. . . ."

Stupina's story was, in fact, full of unexpected turns. She had gone away, counting on joining her old friends. Everything had turned out differently. They had been parted while they were on the way, and Anya was sent to a camp at a factory, where the prisoners were for the most part French. There she had organized the escape of twenty Czechs and had fallen into the hands of the Gestapo, the Gestapo had put her back into the same camp, but in a far worse position. After they had been liberated, Stupina had been sent home via Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. She had seen for herself what was going on in Europe, and could judge many events now by her own personal experience.

Never before had the mass of the people taken such long and instructive journeys as in the course of this war. Millions of people—French, Czech, Yugoslav, Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Uzbek and Azerbaijanian—tramped the length and breadth of Europe and saw fascism in all its starkness. They saw at close quarters the Allies, the change of regimes, they could compare the fascist order with the new transitional regimes, and return home with a wealth of political observations, which they could not have accumulated in any school in peacetime.

But Anya Stupina had returned hanging her head guiltily. The impulse that had spurred her to go to Germany now seemed less romantic than three years ago, when she had naively counted on taking part in the revolution in Germany. The consciousness of her mistake had come upon her keenly only in Rumania, at a stage in her journey when she had found herself among the former collaborationist mayors and burgomasters who were buying themselves Rumanian passports so as to lose themselves in the world, when she had found herself in a crowd of the Germans' mistresses and traitresses, slaves and martyrs. People with clear conscience were mixed up with downright rogues.

Only then did Stupina realize that in the eyes of her fellow countrymen she differed little from Soprunova of Stavropol who had kept a brothel for German officers.

Almost on the threshold of her home her second wartime life began. The Komsomol organizer awoke in her and, taught by her camp experience, she exposed the former mayors and policemen recognizing them by signs that infuriated this scum, who were now attempting to give themselves out as oppressed people.

But at Kharkov railway station she unexpectedly encountered a group of women, known to her from the camp, women who had left their country as German "Frauen". They hailed her noisily: "Here you are, chocolate baby, come and join your own gang!" and the station had roared with hundreds of voices, while she had burst into tears and rushed away, as though there was truth in what they said.

She trembled convulsively even now, as she told how ashamed and terrified she had been and how she would dread her past for long years to come.

"I want to go away somewhere," she concluded.

"Of course, you don't deserve a medal for your little affair, there's no doubt about that. People like you might have done far more, but there's no need for you to be afraid of your past. . ." And, taking her hands in his and patting them, he glanced into her eyes so closely that she flung back her head in momentary fright.

Svetlana Chirikova's story was simpler and drearier; she had been pressed into work in Germany and, not daring to disobey the German order, had been sent to a munitions plant making artillery shells. Captivity instantly destroyed any initiative or will power of her own. The lying German stories of their victories over the Red Army seemed to have some foundation to her mind, she was stunned with horror and pain, but could not find the strength to disbelieve them. Then the world in which she had grown up began to look very far away, and forever lost to her. From that time and for the rest of her life her lot seemed to be a half-animal existence. And she submitted to it. When she was chosen, after a while, by a German NCO as his temporary "friend", she yielded to this disgrace without a murmur. Then she did not care what happened, she no longer believed in any other life. The German was transferred to another place and he handed over Svetlana to his friend; again, she neither protested nor tried to resist, but accepted the news with the indifference that had grown on her in captivity like some disease. At night she dreamed of Russia, school, her friends, the gay holidays in the collective farm, but it all belonged to some earlier, vanished life, she did not even weep, only sighed after it as something that might have been but was no more.

"If one were to write down all I've seen of the Germans, I don't believe one of them would be left alive," she declared, biting her trembling lips.

Stupina gave a little tug at her sleeve.

"Don't, Lana," she said reproachfully. "Don't torture yourself. No use talking of the things that have happened—they're all over and done with."

Voropayev was still groping among vague guesses, when Svetlana gave a short bitter laugh.

"The long and short of it is I'm a G. W. . . You know what I mean . . ." she hesitated, "German . . . wench, that's all."

"Why broadcast all this? Nothing for you to brag about, is it?"

Svetlana shook her head. There were tears in her eyes. A lump rose in her throat and choked her.

"Scourging yourself with these stories is no good," Voropayev was about to say, when Stupina interrupted him with a rare gentleness and insistence.

"Alexei Veniaminovich, it's terribly hard for her. . . See how they've broken her. . . The things she's saying. . . She's been dragged through so much dirt, it would take five years to wash her clean."

"No, I said that because—I'll tell you in a minute why I said it . . ." and with a despairing, bitter gesture that was more sincere than the fullest repentance, she clutched her head and rocked to and fro, gasping out: "The child—I can't hide the child! How am I to live? Who will ever trust me now? . . I'm done for, Alexei Veniaminovich, and there's no one to turn to for help!"

Still clutching her head, as though fearful to leave this unfortunate head of hers without support, she ran out into the yard, and, sobbing wildly, rushed away down the slope into the vineyards.

Voropayev started up on his bed. Calming him, Stupina said:

"Down there in the muscatel vines,

we have a watchman's hut. She'll go and have a good cry, and will feel better. Only please help her, Alexei Veniaminovich. If you knew what she was like before the war—such a good, kind girl, my best friend. . . Perhaps, she could be sent away somewhere. Because if she has her baby here, they'll drive her into the grave. Who will trouble to probe into her heart?"

Voropayev took her by her thin sharp shoulders.

"So you're her friend still?"

"Yes, there's not one of my friends left. Only Svetlana. And I'm sorry for her. She's a lost soul."

"And what about you, silly? Is everything all right with you?"

"Yes, everything's all right with me," her lips said soundlessly, but the truth of it could be read in her sincere look, it was impossible to doubt her.

"Well, we'll think of something. Drop in on me in a couple of days."

"Very good. Your order'll be obeyed, Comrade Colonel," and then the slim figure disappeared behind the stone wall around Tsimbal's yard.

A rustling in the bushes and the rattle of the pebbles on the stony path told him that she had run to console her friend.

"So that's where the easy drifting life leads," he thought to himself.

He did not want to think any more about Chirikova. It was hard to help such people. But Anya Stupina interested him. She was worth lending a helping hand.

It was very fortunate that Sergeant Gorodtsov, a demobilized army man from the *Mikoyan* collective farm, dropped in about that time, though he had not been sent for. He had been hit in both legs in Hungary, and had just come out of hospital. While he was away at the front his wife and mother had moved here, so he had come to look about him and see what sort of a spot it was, and as he did not know where to start, he decided to consult his ex-army man neighbour—as a "responsible" person.

As soon as Gorodtsov entered the yard and glanced about, taking in everything like an old soldier, Voropayev knew almost at once with the instinct of someone trained in warfare—that this was a stout, capable soldier and, very likely, a good manager. He was wearing a short, patched sheepskin coat, and an imitation fur cap. He limped up to the bed and, guessing that this was the man he wanted, and therefore asking no unnecessary questions, presented himself in army fashion.

"I just dropped in to be neighbourly," he began in a roundabout fashion, "people tell me there's a wounded colonel here, a man of varied experience, and with decorations—well, I thought to myself, we can't have too many of those kind, I'd better drop in and get to know him."

The man looked about forty. He had a pleasant, wholesome youngish face, with a bristly reddish moustache. He had a habit of screwing up his small twinkling eyes as if he was eyeing something away in the distance.

"Reconnaissance?"

"No, Comrade Colonel, artillery, the god of war. I was a gunner."

"Get far?"

"Had a look at Hungary," Gorodtsov replied, compressing his lips significantly. "That was the end of my fighting days. You didn't happen to get there?"

"No, I didn't last long enough. The fighting finished for me in Bulgaria."

"I've been there, as well. It wasn't bad. That's a brisk, lively kind of people. I tried their meat roasted on a spit, smoked their tobacco, drank their wine. You can get a good idea of what they're saying, too. And their village folks—they're pretty sharp. But hot-tempered. Terrible! They give back tit for tat and before you know where you are, they're up with their fists. Honest to God! If there's anything they don't fancy, they'll settle it with their knives, and they'll get what they want. A daring people!"

So the two army men fell into conversation and to their great delight, they found they had fought in the same battles. They understood each other from the first word, and soon Gorodtsov, without a touch of embarrassment, pulled a tin of preserved meat from one pocket, opened it with a huge curved knife, and drew a lump of bread from the other pocket.

"Now please help yourself, Comrade Colonel, and don't refuse to have a bite with me," he said, setting the food in front of Voropayev, and munching with

appetite continued: "The way it used to be—when we took a position, we'd dig ourselves in, and I'd make a survey of the spot, look about and get used to it. It was a rule with me—if I didn't like a place, I didn't feel like fighting for it—what do you think of that? Still, I must say, it seldom happened, mostly I'd be building houses for myself, in my own mind, in each new place I went to."

Voropayev raised himself on his elbow. "And did you build many?"

"Ay, ten or a dozen, maybe. One at Briansk, a second at Vilnius—on the river Vilia itself. Ever been there? So you know what lovely places there are. Then there's one on the Terek, and on the Kuban. And one on the Dnieper—a regular palace, honestly! I mostly picked locations by the riverside. You know how it is when you're in the trenches, chilled to the very soul and out of sheer downright boredom you start imagining how you would settle down here, in peacetime, and what sort of a place you'd set up for yourself, well, and you always make up something. I got my gun team so interested in this business that, as soon as we'd settled somewhere for the night, the gun commander would call out: 'Hey, Terenti, where's your house going to be this time? So's we don't blow it up by any chance!' Yes, I had two nice little farms put up on the Vistula—I couldn't resist it."

"And what about Hungary?"

"I didn't fancy it. No, I didn't build anything either with the Magyars or the Rumanians. I don't understand myself why I couldn't. Such nice places, weren't they? The Danube itself is a marvel. . . ."

The time passed unnoticed in talk and evening came on.

Glancing in a leisurely, dignified way at his expensive wrist watch with a black face and gold hands, Gorodtsov gave a polite little start, and pretended he had not meant to stay so long.

Voropayev urged him to stay. He saw in Terenti Gorodtsov an eccentric, imaginary builder of homes like himself, and in the man, he saw a portrait of himself as in a snapshot.

"I had oral lessons from three commanders of fronts, and that, anyone can tell you, is something to be proud of!" Gorodtsov said, with a touch of respect for his own luck. "When I was on the Western Front I caught it hot!" he shook his head convulsively, as though he had swallowed a mouthful of mustard. "Yes, I got a dose of vitamins I wouldn't fancy again!.. The commander of the Stalingrad front—you won't believe me! —he got at me in verse! Well! They were just four lines but they'd make your eyes pop out. Puts the proper words into them, that one! On the Fourth Ukrainian Front, the commander had quite a different way of going about it: he'd round you up, looking reproachfully at you all the time, as though you were harrying him into the grave and not that he was harrying you. He cursed you with pity—and got terribly upset himself, somehow. And you'd stand there, feeling a regular scoundrel and the tears ready to choke you. He'd work on your feelings till your heart was ready to burst. But I've heard that the worst of all was Rokossovsky. He never cursed you, they say, only he'd hold you up to ridicule till you were caught fast and wouldn't know where to turn. He had a sharp tongue, he could say a thing, with a smile, harmless-like, but when he'd said it, you'd feel all your insides twist up into knots."

Then, leaning forward, close to Voropayev's face whispered, as though the thrush that had made its home in the yard might overhear the most sacred and cherished of all his memories:

"I saw Comrade Stalin twice. First time it was near Moscow, after we'd driven back the Germans. Somewhere near Klin. We heard he'd come. I was detailed to carting the dead Germans away then. We knew for certain that he came, our "grape vine telegraph" spread the news from mouth to mouth, but as for where he was to be, we couldn't find out. Of course, I never thought I'd ever get a chance to see him. And listen to how it turned out.

"It was night, I remember, and the moon shining so bright — you could see every bit of a bush two hundred yards off. We were clearing the Germans away, and these stiffs were so hard they made a noise like earthenware pots, seemed like they'd break into bits if you dropped them. We were loading them onto carts. And then, all of a sudden, we could see cars, four or five of them, out on the highway. They stopped. First one commander got out, then another, not a

word to us, just gave us a sort of sign as if to say, you get on with your work and we'll get on with ours. And I saw one of them coming towards us. He was wearing an overcoat and I couldn't see his rank, but he was walking boldly and ordinarily enough. 'How are you, comrades?' We all answered, of course, in the usual way. 'Well,' he says, 'do you find it interesting work burying Germans?' And we had a lad in our team, I don't know what kind of folks he came from, with a sharp tongue. And he says: 'Why shouldn't we? Better for us to be burying them than to have them burying us.' He just blurted it out like that. The newcomer went up to him, seeing he was so ready with his tongue. 'And what's your opinion—do you think our army's done everything it could in this instance?' And our young fellow says: 'Why, of course, it's done everything it could. In fact, it's done more than it could.' Just then the light fell full on the stranger's face, and we recognized him—it was Stalin!

"Well, I can tell you, the lad was flabbergasted. And Comrade Stalin shook his head as much as to say he couldn't agree with that. 'No,' he said, 'it's not right to think we've done more than we could. Let's be a bit more modest and say we've done our level best. Will the people understand that?'

"Then I opened my mouth—how I dared and where I found words is a wonder! 'Comrade Stalin,' I said, 'the people will understand. They'll understand all right, you can be sure of that,' I said. And I couldn't get another word out—my throat felt as though someone were throttling me. He nodded and moved off a little way. Then he stopped, took off his fur cap, and stood a long while alone. And as he was going back to the car, he asked another of us:

"'Aren't you pleased that we've beaten the Germans?'

"Now this fellow—an Uzbek, or maybe an Azerbaijanian—was one of these cantankerous, cross-grained little soldiers you know, nothing goes right for them, and like the other lad he says: 'No! I'm not!'

"Well, brother, when the generals heard that they all crowded around him wanting to know why, and what was up?

"But the fellow stuck to what he'd said—he wasn't pleased, not he. 'I swore an oath on the blood of a comrade,' he says, 'that I wouldn't take any prisoners. I swore before my people, my own countrymen that I would not take any German alive, but kill each one of them. And here there's an order that we've got to take prisoners. Now I'm at loggerheads with the order and all because of that, just imagine,' he says, 'I wasn't given any decoration: I kept my vow, and disobeyed the order.'

"Comrade Stalin laughed at this and said:

"'I'll speak for you and ask them to overlook it and make an exception for this once!'"

Gorodtsov fell silent, smiling his quizzical smile as he sat lost in thought, reminiscing.

"The second time I saw him," he resumed his story, "was at—you'd never guess where. At Stalingrad."

"He didn't go there."

"That's as much as you know, Comrade Colonel, but we know different—he was there. You can't hide anything from the soldiers. There are cases when even some big chief has not even heard of things our boys know. Take it from me—he was there! I saw him myself. He may have gone under another name, of course, I don't really know how he did it—we soldiers weren't interested in that part—but we know he was there for certain. And you yourself, what do you think?—could we have done all that without him? Could we have stood out? Not a chance, I was serving under Rodimtsev in the 19th Guards, we were stationed on the river bank, close to the centre. The 'zone' or the 'part of the city'—these were only names. To put it plainly, it was just a strip of land. I was the messenger at the battalion command post. The Germans were perhaps fifty paces away. It was night, getting on towards daybreak. All of a sudden I saw someone coming from the regiment side. Three people there were. I asked for their passes, as I was supposed to. I looked—and saw it was Stalin! And though it was pretty dark, still it wasn't so dark that the Germans wouldn't be able to make him out. He went ahead a bit and stopped by a machine gun. There he stood, looking over at the town, with his hand shading his eyes. I gasped and my partner—he said to me: 'What do they mean by

leaving him all by himself? He'll be killed this minute!' I was shaking from head to foot like a drowning man, but I'd no right to breathe a word. So I stood there trembling and I was itching to call out: 'Better keep out of this, Comrade Stalin, we'll manage without you, I don't go poking my nose into the command's business, and don't you mix yourself up in the soldier's job...' At this point the Germans must have spotted him and they started to comb the hillock for all they were worth. And he went on standing there. Well, there was no time to lose, as I saw it. A soldier has his own barometer. Never in my life did I have to ask whether an order had come out or not in the division for an attack, I just knew instinctively whether there would be one or not. A sensible commanding officer knows that the soldier doesn't need driving. I was on my feet and I dashed forward. Hurrah! This was just what the boys were waiting for, it seemed, they shouted hurrah, too, and ran after me. Then I saw that our neighbours were joining us, and more after them, and we dashed on . . . we'd got going! I looked back every now and again while I was running. I could just make out his figure. And as we set to work on the Germans, and the very ground of Stalingrad shook, he took off his cap, waved it to us and went down to the shore. Well, we boys had come to an understanding that we wouldn't budge from the spot. If he could take the risk, then, you know... That's how the turn came. Believe me! I went through it and saw it all for myself. And I'm not the only one—plenty of others saw it."

"I believe you," Voropayev said. "I believe you and envy you."

Stories of Stalin's visits to the front were common on every front, and the more difficult the particular sector was, the more firmly the men believed in his presence.

Tsimbal came up to Voropayev's bedside, looked the guest over suspiciously and shook his head.

"Ever heard, my demobilized friend, of a regular timetable for the sick? You have, have you? Well, that's first-rate. Because, you know, there are some that say to themselves: I'll just drop in for a visit and we'll sit talking till the cows come home."

Gorodtsov got up, startled, and gave a guilty laugh.

"You're right, quite right," he said, straightening his belt in some embarrassment. "So what am I to do? Shall I stop in these parts?" he asked suddenly, remembering the only question that was important at the moment and which, engrossed in his war reminiscences, he had not had time to discuss with Voropayev. For the first time in these few hours he looked bewildered. "If I could be sure that I wouldn't be alone, and that there would be a helping hand, so to speak, I'd—well, of course, I'd stay."

"Stay, by all means! There are so few folks here."

"That's what I'm thinking."

"If your family has come here, then why go back on it?"

"That's right. What I mean is—you might be left stranded here, no company of your own, no one to talk over old times with, and remember things. Might as well be deaf and dumb. But, since it's like this. . . ."

"You're at the *Mikoyan*, eh?" Tsimbal asked in an indifferent tone.

"Yes! Yesterday they got a promise from me, they want to elect me chairman."

Tsimbal shot him a surprised glance.

"And my hands are itching to get to work in wheat," Gorodtsov continued. "When I'm asleep I see wheat in my dreams. I used to work on a combine. And when I wake up, I seem to smell the wheat. But here," he said sadly, "they don't sow wheat, it's all vineyards and tobacco, fiddling sort of work, dull as ditchwater. Aye, to be in the wheat fields again! I miss them."

"Hop over to the Kuban," Tsimbal advised, "you can lose your way in the wheat there."

"I'd go, and gladly, but my family ties me down, they're settlers, we can't just clear out. They've given their word, and accepted a loan, there's no going back on it. Though these vines are worse than cabbage to me. Fiddling, footling work. I'd give anything to be back at wheat . . . oh I'd put everything I've got into it then."

He took leave of them.

"But you're staying on, though, aren't you?" Voropayev asked him.

"Yes, though it goes against the grain. I daresay, I'll find something for my hands to do here, too. The artillery,

Comrade Colonel, the god of war, shouldn't be at a loss anywhere. Well, so long."

Voropayev was not over optimistic about his condition. He knew that he had entered upon a very difficult stage in his life and that it was beyond anyone's power to help him.

Shura? She was very far removed from his present interests.

He could, of course, have gone into one of the sanatoria that just opened, but it was intolerable to think of being in the position of a sick man again, and then, too, Serezhka and he would have to remain apart.

Family—how necessary it was to have a corner to call one's own, a roof over one's head, in short, a home.

He was not at all surprised when he heard Lena's low voice one day, asking where she could find Colonel Voropayev. On learning that he was inside she came noiselessly into Tsimbal's yard with a small bundle in her hand. She was wearing the same old felt slippers and a black tight-fitting mannish jacket. At that moment, before she was aware that Voropayev had noticed and was watching her from his wooden bed in the yard, she looked embarrassed. It was obvious that she felt very uncomfortable indeed.

When she reached the house, she knocked rather hesitatingly at the door, and when Voropayev called out to her, she gave a start.

"I didn't notice you," she exclaimed, smiling and frowning. "Good morning. Mother said I ought to go and see you. She's sent you something. Here you are."

The bundle hung for an instant in the air. Then she flushed, set it on the ground and without waiting for an invitation, sat down on the edge of the wooden bedstead, unable to look at Voropayev yet.

"So that's the way it is," she said still smiling and frowning, "you got very sick, eh?"

"How's Korytov, is he grumbling about me?" Voropayev asked to help her out.

Her answer surprised him.

"I'm sure I don't know," she said, with a slight gesture of dismissal. "I didn't say anything to him about coming here. Might get some idea into his head, bother him!"

"Well, and what about the house, and how's Sophia Ivanovna getting on?"

Before she had time to answer, he understood that her mother knew nothing of her visit, either.

"Ah," she said in a vexed tone, "Mother's always got something or other on hand... Always on the run... But you know who remembers you? Stoiko, the chairman of the collective farm, the tall one-armed man, you know... He liked you very much."

Voropayev's thoughts went back to the night by the campfire, the distribution of the houses and the tall handsome man with the empty sleeve.

Lena looked about her with interest at the yard, the house, the wooden bed on which Voropayev lay, covered by Tsimbal's sheepskin cloak. A faint smile, either of pity or irony, passed over her face.

"It's not a bad little place," she said at last, pulling and picking at the edge of her jacket. "Are you going to live here?"

"Why—here? I'm your partner. As soon as I get on my feet again, Sophia Ivanovna and I will set to work on our house. It seems to me, Lena, you're not pleased that I'm getting mixed up in your family affairs?"

"No, why shouldn't I be pleased?" she replied in a whisper. "It's my mother's affair, I've no time to bother with the house, I have to work."

"But wouldn't you like to get a bit more prosperous, Lena, wouldn't you like to have your own garden and a couple of chickens and a dog of some kind?"

She brushed an imaginary cobweb from her eyes.

"I don't know," she said drily, "I don't know, I never thought of anything like that and... I don't know, honestly, I don't."

"Is there a lot of work?" he asked, to turn the conversation from a subject that might be painful to her.

"Oh, you don't know the half of it! I'm just sick of meetings," she said, livening up at once, and a smile brightened her frowning face. "We've fallen so far into arrears with fuel that there seems no way out of the mess. Korytov falls asleep over the phone, wakes up at the phone, gives instructions—one after the other—and yesterday they

used six stools for firewood in the hospital."

Once having found a subject for conversation, she grew much more cheerful.

"How did you find out I was sick?"

"They heard about it in the Party district committee office. Victor Ogarnov came and told us. Shirokogorov rang up twice. Mother was terribly upset to hear of it."

"Is she afraid I'll throw up the house business?"

"Naturally."

"And what about you?"

Now for the first time she raised her eyes to his, and looked at him steadily.

"I've no reason to be afraid of you. Only I wanted to tell you that I feel guilty—because I thought then that you'd come here house hunting, wanting to get one for nothing...".

Voropayev was about to protest, but she prevented him with:

"Don't take offence, I've a bad tongue sometimes. I seem to imagine all sorts of things...."

"But I think you must be very kind really, Lena, kind and good. You came to see me. Probably you walked all the way, did you? There's a friend. Let me shake hands with you. So you came here all the way on foot?"

Reluctantly, evidently struggling with herself, she held out her hand awkwardly, and seeing something wrong in this, got up and said goodbye. It was hard to persuade her to stay.

There was an unusual dignity in her manner and behaviour, in her dislike of high-sounding phrases and gestures and in her reserved solicitude for him.

They talked a little longer of his health, the house and the way the weather kept up so wonderfully.

It was getting dark. Knowing that she had a long distance to go, Voropayev did not delay her. It would be a lonely road.

"Thanks for remembering me, Lena. When I'm well enough to be up and about, I'll get busy about the house, and we'll live like squires. You and I will have a home of our own. Honestly, I'll bring my Serezhka and let him play about here along with your little girl."

Her eyes were downcast; she glanced up from time to time to see if he was joking, but she made no reply.

"Well, I hope you'll be better soon. Only please don't tell anyone I came to see you. I don't like ..." without finishing what she wanted to say she went toward the gate, turning to nod in response to his belated request to send on any letters and telegrams.

Her light footfall was no longer heard as soon as she went out into the street.

He thought over her visit for some time. It was hard for her as it was for him. He did not know yet whether he could make her life easier or not but he wanted the affairs of this quiet woman to go smoothly. Then, he fancied, his own affairs would go better, too. He wanted to make Lena's life more cheerful. It was pleasant when there were people you wanted to help in the world.

It was decided to hold the club meetings at each house in turn, and Tsimbal's was the first to be chosen, on account of Voropayev not being able to walk yet.

Shirokogorov, Maria Bogdanovna, the director of the children's sanatorium, the Podnebesko couple from the *First of May* farm, Gorodtsov, and, of course, many of the people from the *Kalinin* farm, all of whom had been previously invited, attended the first meeting.

Unexpectedly for everyone the meteorologist, Zarubin, came down from the mountains. He was a tall thin man, with an unruly smoky-grey moustache, singed at the ends by the homemade kerosene lamp.

The mountain coolness that clung about him had the smell of fresh melons. He spoke of the winds as if they were people working for the weather bureau.

"Last year's was of quite a different make—unstable, capricious, full of whims. But this one's strong, you know, northerly and sure of itself, a real treat! I feel him so friendly as if I could talk to him."

Zarubin had come for the newspapers and on learning of the opening of the club, lingered in the hope of getting hold of some books. He was a passionate devotee of the long novel.

"Short stories are just trifles, sheer nonsense," he declared, blowing on his moustache to keep it out of his mouth. "Before you've time to get properly warmed up, the author's finished—the wretch. Up in the mountains, ours is a regular long novel zone, a novel calculated to last two or three nights running."

Lieutenant-Colonel Rybalchenko who had come here, like Voropayev, to seek

a quiet haven, and instead had been made the chairman of a fishing collective, brought three kilograms of freshly caught fish, and the electrician Serdiuk brought a map of Europe, which he pinned up carefully on the wall, without asking anyone, coughing significantly behind his hand meanwhile. He never parted with his map, for he thought he might one day be called on at short notice to some very important meeting on the international situation, and the speaker might need a good map. Along with the map Serdiuk always carried a long reed pointer, a supply of pins with little flags on them and two reels of red and blue thread to mark the lines of both the fronts at one time.

Before the war Serdiuk had been a mechanic at a machine and tractor station. When he was demobilized after being wounded, he had the rank of a captain in the Guards. He decided not to return to his former trade and got a job as an electrician on the *Kalinin* collective farm, though the line had not yet been repaired. He played the accordion, went to the district centre on some sort of business, carried on a correspondence with somebody about farm affairs and always wore a busy look, displeased, and at times suffering, though everyone knew he was an inveterate idler, just as there are inveterate drunkards.

"You ought to lay aside your decorations for the time being and use a pick," Voropayev advised him at their first meeting, but the man only smiled enigmatically.

"Well, Comrade Colonel, supposing I do take up a pick, where shall I use it, may I ask? You're too general, the way you put the matter."

"What is there general about it? Just take your pick and line up with the rest, what's the sense in playing the gent?"

"So I have to use a pick and stand in line? . . Very good. And what about skilled labour? I'm a mechanic of the first water, like a diamond. Is it right to throw away skilled labour?"

But Voropayev could see that Serdiuk was lying low and waiting for something.

"How's life?
What sort of a living do you make?"

"Life? You couldn't call this life. As soon as I'm through with my trophies—I'm done for."

But here again he was only pretending. He had no trophies except for about ten maps — of German make — which he "rented out," and an accordion, that he played for days at a stretch, seated on a bench outside his house, if he didn't happen to be invited out for the evening.

He liked this charmed existence, and strove to prolong it by every means in his power, but he did not know exactly how to do it.

It was expected that Voropayev would give a long talk on the war, and few knew that Anya Stupina, who had returned from German captivity, was to speak; Voropayev was only going to introduce her and make the necessary commentary. Anya was so agitated that she could not get started, so Voropayev had to help her out. She quickly recovered, however, and when she reached the description of her terrible journey and told how she had lost all her friends, the men in the packed room began to smoke of one accord, and the women, more open about their feelings, sniffed audibly as they wiped away their tears. Stupina's account of her travels in Europe and her return home was so vivid and interesting that even the meteorologist, who had been smiling rather superciliously up to then, struck his fist several times on the table. Voropayev had very little to add to the talk, except for a few words.

An interval followed. Then, in a low diffident voice that seemed about to break any moment, Tatiana Zaichik supplemented Anya's confession with the story of how her husband, Khariton Ivanovich, and six partisans with him had come to the village while the Germans were there in connection with the youth recruiting, and carried on agitation against going voluntarily into slavery, and how they had all been tortured to death in the square in front of the schoolhouse.

Voropayev moved that the square in front of the school should be called after the fallen heroes. A resolution to that effect was passed. Then he proposed that the street where the battle had taken place should be called Partisanskaya, and this was passed, too.

"We're from all over the district and we must get to know one another," he said, glancing at Shirokogorov and at-

tracting the attention of the whole auditorium with his glance. "We have amongst us the celebra ed vintner, Sergei Constantinovich Shirokogorov. It would be interesting to listen to him as well. Then we have an expert on vinegrowing, known all over the Soviet Union, a practical experimental horticulturist, the war hero, Opanas Ivanovich Tsimbal, I remember to this day all he told me about the different kinds of grapes, back in the Kuban region. And we have. . . ."

". . . Colonel Voropayev!" Anya cried out in such ringing affectionate tones that some were startled and tried to silence her with shocked gestures.

"Yes, we want to hear you, Alexei Vitaminych!" several voices called.

"Very well, there's myself, too. . . Then we must get to know our neighbours. Our guests today are the Podnebeskos, husband and wife, from the *First of May* collective farm, and Comrade Gorodtsov from the *Mikoyan*—all three of them seasoned people who have seen a great deal in their time."

As he spoke, Voropayev noticed the first signs of animation in Serdiuk's apathetic face. The man frowned and took several puffs at his cigarette one after another. Even this shiftless idler, Voropayev thought, wanted to appear in a good light and mean something to the collective farm society, show a side that was perhaps not known yet to the people present.

"Does anyone else want to speak? Anybody feel like it?"

Serdiuk did not volunteer at once. Fidgeting a little and staring at the ground with knitted brows, he said at last in an indifferent tone:

"If it happened to be on a broader theme . . . well, I might. I've been to America. . . If anybody's interested—I can tell them about it. . . ."

Everybody was amazed: Serdiuk—and America?

The interval did not come to an end. What is known in the big clubs as the interval is the main part of the "program" in the small clubs. They sat talking. Tsimbal, who was the chairman, handed round the wine Paussov had brought, someone fried the fish, another threw in a dozen or so of onions. They all had a snack while pretending it was all in fun.

Then Rybalchenko spoke:

"Anya told her story very well indeed. It would be a good thing if she wrote down all she's gone through. That would be a book! *Across Europe*—you might call it, I'll tell you what I thought of, neighbours: writing a book about one's self: *Myself — In Five Years' Time.*"

Rybalchenko drew out hastily from the pocket of his naval officer's tunic, which he still wore, a small thick book and waved it in front of the audience.

"The whole of me is in this, comrades— a full confession, so to speak. I started building my house. . . ."

"So he's also building a house?" Voropayev thought to himself, smiling. "Look at all the builders we've got together here!"

"I started the Fishermen's House and mapped everything out as it should be. It's to have a garden, a collective farm garden, but only in the spring of the third year. Beehives—the fourth, and at the end of the five-year plan I'm going to paint a picture 'The Landing Party at Kerch,' and hang it in the club."

"Good Lord! Were you there, too?" Tsimbal jumped up in excitement.

"Yes, I was. So we were in it together?"

"And so we were! The war's made the whole world kin!—none of us strangers, we're all one big family."

They talked of how people had grown up during the war, and of plans for the future; touched on the situation at the fronts and dreamed of what the harvest might bring this year.

So they would have sat talking until cockcrow, had it not been for the wind that suddenly struck loudly on the sheet iron roof, scratched and scrambled noisily like a great wild cat, then darted silently into the depths of the garden.

"What a nuisance! Giving us the signal to go."

But for some time yet they went on saying their parting words, smoking in the garden and then said goodbye again in the street.

The Podnebeskos were the last to go. They wanted to tell Voropayev that they had enjoyed the evening and were very touched by it, and that now it seemed life would be much easier for them, when they had so many fine interesting people around them, but they could only press his hand and tell him he must hurry and get well.

He himself was touched and carried away by all that had taken place.

Actually, it seemed as though nothing much had happened; a few people had gathered to discuss things, but apparently, this was just what they needed, to lean on someone else's shoulders and feel someone's glance of goodwill, even this alone was enough to make them feel stronger and more self-confident.

It was long since Voropayev had been in such close touch with people, and long since he had felt so comfortable as now.

He was no longer the officer at the head of affairs, he managed nothing and decided nothing, but there are times when a man needs a good listener and a good counsellor.

In one evening, he had learned much more than Korytov was ever likely to.

He lay for a long time with closed eyes, thinking of the people with whom fate had thrown him in contact.

Now he saw his former army life in a new light. There was a time when he could not find a clue to the successes of his best political workers. Yes, he had better admit it — only now, when it was no longer necessary, had he got to the root of the matter.

It was those who were capable of self-sacrifice who had succeeded. The eloquent speakers and the witty entertaining fellows had failed. Often it was the inarticulate, the taciturn, who came out on top. The supremely devoted—those who could do nothing by halves—won. And the brave—even in agitation work, that was the amazing thing!—the plucky fellows won every time.

They were just as necessary here at the cultivation of the vineyards as in a bayonet charge. Voropayev suddenly remembered with a certain satisfaction the nickname the collective farmers had given him: "Vitaminych"—it sounded like an apt description.

Hardly would the sun appear behind the rim of the sea and the first golden shadows of the dawn lighten the air, when from his observation post in bed, Voropayev would discern through the field glasses Natasha Podnebesko's dress, red like a pomegranate flower, in the *First of May* "Riesling" vineyards.

Yuri always saw her off to work. Probably, while all the people were still asleep, they went searching for carrots in the old state farm gardens, and then stood with their arms around each other, munching their carrots, and enjoying like children, the sun rising above the dove-coloured horizon.

At that early hour the sky over the sea showed colours that were never repeated at any other time of the day; the delicate green above the horizon gave place to an elusive opal, a bar of lemon yellow, and above that a misty dark blue — a fine sharply-marked zone that extended to the very zenith, where, sparkling, quivering, soaring free over the sea, shone the great morning star.

Each time Voropayev saw the young couple on their early walk, he was overcome by an irresistible emotion. These two had survived a cruel war which had robbed them of their youth's best years and of their homes, had broken their strength, and yet there they stood, clasping one another close, confronting a vast sea and a vast sun, alone against the elements, as happy as in the first days of their love.

Then the Ogarnovs would come out.

No need to look for Varvara through the field glasses. Her piercing voice, such a voice as is heard only in the south, cleaved through the distance, almost never flagging. Some birds shriek like that, only pausing to catch their breath.

Adding the accompanying gestures to these shouts, Voropayev guessed that the object of her morning rancour must be Victor Ogarnov—this idle good-for-nothing office man—as she always called him. She declared plainly that she was ready to kill him, she was so ashamed to look the people in the face who had trusted a parasite like him. Aye, and what good were they, curse them, if they elected a sleepy-headed cripple like himself, only to make a mockery of him. It had cut her to the quick that until recently her husband had been in the background and now she could not get over the fact that he was obliged to do more than the others.

Varvara's voice heralded the beginning of the working day, and as soon as it had fallen quiet, nothing disturbed the silence till midday, when she was sure to be the first to sing.

She was an energetic and capable woman, and led the right kind of life, but not a word that came out of her mouth could be taken at its face value.

Somewhere about that nameless hour between dark and daylight, from down by the shore which was out of sight from Voropayev's position, came the splutter of a motor. Lieutenant-Colonel Rybalchenko's "Pallas", puffing and smoking, would put out to sea. When the vessel was some way out from the shore, visible now from Tsimbal's yard, the skipper sounded the siren. This was the signal for Voropayev to run up the red flag on the pole of a bird house, this was the official opening of the day.

Voropayev had now become a kind of legendary talking stone, which might be entrusted with all manner of affairs in the certainty that he would carry them out, as he had nothing else to do and was always there.

Someone called over the garden wall to him:

"Alexei Vitaminych! Would you mind telling Shustov when he goes by that he's wanted at the district office?"

"Righto, I'll tell him."

Then he heard a heavy, uneven tread, popularly known as "dot and carry."

"Shustov?"

"Yes."

"They want you at the district office."

"Thanks. Is Tsimbal home? No. Well, when he comes back tell him he ought to see about that manure. We've got the invoice for it."

Anya Stupina ran in.

"You know what?—a lot of children maimed in the war have been brought here to Maria Bogdanovna's sanatorium, and oh! you should just see them. Some have lost their arms, some—their legs. . . We decided to take turns at looking after them. Oh, yes, and I nearly forgot—a little parcel for you," and she was gone before he could open the parcel, which contained a hunk of fat bacon.

Once the secretary of the village soviet came in and informed him with a bewildered look that the calendar was missing from his desk.

"What am I supposed to do about it?"

"Oh, nothing; I just told you because I thought you might happen to hear who took it. . . ."

Perhaps the most touching of all was that at the second club meeting which he did not attend it was proposed (he was told by Stupina as a secret), to rebuild for him, at the expense of the collective farm, the house that stood windowless and doorless in the lot adjoining Tsimbal's yard. It was to be finished by the summer. And once he heard someone shout in the street:

"Don't you go grazing your goats on Voropayev's land, a plague on you and your goats!"

All the houses he was going to have! If he could only live! As a matter of fact, he was living to the utmost of his strength.

There was almost no time to think of approaching death now; people were constantly coming to him with complaints, accounts of their successes or asking advice; he wrote letters for them to the front, helped to compile articles for the regional paper or thought over his reports to Korytov.

It finally occurred to Voropayev that Korytov was an individualist. He had no sense of leadership. Had he been the conductor of an orchestra, instead of directing the musicians, he would probably have run from one instrument to another and had a shot at playing them all in turn. Still, he loved his district with such a real and passionate love that much could be forgiven him on this account. He was hard to bear with, but he was respected. It was felt, however, that if another, stronger and more vital figure appeared, all the active elements would leave Korytov and join the new leader.

Translated by Hilda Kazanina

(to be continued)

THE STATE AND LITERATURE

With thirty years of history behind it Soviet literature has to its credit a wealth of achievements which both in theory and practice have enriched world literature. One of the most striking and instructive results of these three decades is the new and unprecedented solution of the problem of interrelation between the state and literature.

I want the pen
to equal the gun.
To Stalin's reports
on iron and steel
Too bad
not to add
another one
On the output of verse
and the poet's appeal,

wrote Vladimir Mayakovsky, the finest poet of the Soviet epoch.

These words of the Soviet poet and the outlook on literature expressed in them have shocked some bourgeois critics who gauge literary phenomena with the yardstick of bourgeois relations. Many calumnious statements have been made in the West to the effect that Mayakovsky wrote such things by command of the "dictators from the People's Commissariat of Education."

These lines, however, were in reality the lyric expression of the poet's innermost thoughts and feelings. Mayakovsky felt himself to be an integral part of the people and, therefore, all his writings loudly proclaimed: "I am the State." Let us recall his inspired lines from the poem *Good*.

My own name
in poetical rubric
Makes me glad
—those are my works
Merging with the work
of my Republic.
Dust is wheeled
by rubber tyres.
In my
automobile
ride my
deputies
to hold a meeting
in that red building.
Sit
—but don't get set
in my
MosSoviet. [1]

Vladimir Mayakovsky regarded the Soviet state as his own state, he was proud of it and lauded it. He appraised each of his own poems by its significance for the people, for the state. Such an attitude on the part of a poet could only have its roots in the specific nature of the Soviet state.

Throughout the centuries mankind's greatest thinkers have dreamed of the abolition of slavery, of the abolition of exploitation of man by man, of the freedom and equality of people regardless of their nationality, sex, social status, of a state system based on reasonable and just principles. Campanella, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Fourier, Beethoven, Pushkin, Belinsky—these are some of the glorious names inscribed on the roll of the knights of truth, of dreamers and fighters. Marxism turned the cherished dreams and brilliant prophecies of the thinkers and poets into a science that has become a program of struggle for the working masses. In the Soviet state the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism are being realized in the practical work of building up the new Socialist society.

The Soviet people are the masters of their own fate; the Soviet system not only grants them political rights but ensures that they have the opportunity to enjoy them. They have obtained the broadest access to culture. Culture which had been denied them by centuries of division of labour and class oppression has now, for the first time in history, become the domain of its real masters and makers. The entire policy of the Soviet State is subordinated to the interests of the people, to the struggle for their happiness. The welfare of each Soviet citizen, therefore, depends upon the welfare of the state, and the prosperity of the state depends upon the labour and efforts of the Soviet people.

When the state is an enemy of the people and oppresses the people, the revolt of an honest writer against that state is just, and hallowed by love for the people. It is common knowledge that before 1917, Russian literature was the most rebellious in the world, for it fought passionately and persistently against a state of landlords and capitalists.

A writer's revolt against the state becomes a crime against the people when the state is of the people, when it pursues the aim of their welfare. Is it not clear that it is a natural step for all men of letters who have the welfare of the people truly at heart to unite their efforts with those of the Soviet Government in building up the new Socialist life and the new Socialist culture? Soviet literature has become a literature most loyal to its State giving the latter every support in the great constructive and educational work pursued for the happiness of the people.

[1] Moscow Soviet.

"A state which does not exist for the purpose of oppressing man but for his protection and his happiness need not be attacked and does not deserve to be," wrote Heinrich Mann. "We have always felt the yoke of a state that was opposed to us, our convictions, and our conceptions of justice and humanity. A state has now arisen which pursues the aim we always aspired to — to bring up a community of people in which each works for the happiness of all, to make each man a more perfect member of a society that is constantly being perfected."

The appearance of a new literature, freely united with the state and the people, was not the automatic result of the 1917 Revolution. Not all the old writers did immediately appreciate the great truth of the Socialist Revolution, and the Socialist writers, drawn from the workers and peasants, did not immediately make their appearance. The development and consolidation of Soviet literature was a complicated and lengthy process.

The first to rally to the banner of the Revolution in the early years of Soviet power were those writers who in tsarist Russia had fought for the Revolution, proletarian writers like Gorky, Mayakovsky, Serafimovich, Demyan Bedny. The second group to join with the Revolution consisted of those humanist writers from among the bourgeois intellectuals who had searched long and painfully for a way out of the world of oppression and misery and to whom the Revolution brought the light and an answer to their anguished questioning as to the fate of the world: first among these were the poets Valeri Bryussov and Alexander Blok. And thirdly, came the young proletarian writers whose literary work began with the Revolution, whose unity with the new system was a natural one predetermined by their social existence.

Among the writers of Russia, however, there were many who for a long time declined to accept the Revolution, failing to realize the new paths of life and literature. Some of these, in whom the influence of the old was stronger than their desire for the new truth or their ties with the people, found themselves in the camp of the enemies of the Soviet power. The fate of the émigré, of the homeless wanderer and exile severed from his native land and his people, awaited them at the end of their traitorous and ignoble road. The others, who were in the majority, remained in their own country, doubted and wavered, engaged in endless discussions as to the course to be followed, founded countless groups and schools with the most motley programs. The Bolshevik Party, understanding the tremendous significance which literature has for the people, and for the development of the new socialist culture, has always been actively interested in literary problems. The Party directed the writers and their associations along the only true road of service to the people. The Bolshevik Party helped to guide those who wavered in the early days of the Revolution, corrected their mistakes attentively and tactfully and put them on the right road to the heart of the people.

At the same time the Party firmly and determinedly crushed any attempts on the part of the bourgeoisie to utilize the powerful weapon of the press and literature against the people.

While waging the struggle against the manifestly bourgeois and counter-revolutionary press and literature, the Party clearly realized the insidious danger of the bourgeois influence propagated under the mask of revolutionary phraseology, through outwardly revolutionary forms and organizations. On December 1st, 1920, the Central Committee of the Communist Party published a letter headed *About Proletcults* ("Proletcult" was the abbreviation used for "Proletarian Culture," a cultural and educational organization that existed from 1917 to 1922), severely criticizing the activities of this organization. The "Proletcult" aimed at creating a specific "proletarian culture" out of touch with the real tasks of the proletariat, and denying peasants and intellectuals all participation in this work. Ideologically the Proletcult based its work on the anti-Marxist, mechanistic theory propounded by A. Bogdanov, a supporter of Machian philosophy. The Central Committee pointed out that because of the separatist policy of "Proletcult", because it held aloof from the general tasks of the revolutionary proletariat, this organization had become inundated with futurists, decadents, adherents of philosophical idealism and other lackeys of the bourgeoisie. Under the guise of "proletarian culture" they had begun to serve up to the workers the old trash of harmful, anti-democratic ideas and art theories.

From the very outset of the Revolution the Bolshevik Party, together with the Soviet Government, aimed steadfastly at a literature that would convey the high moral and social ideals of Socialism to the people. The Party and the Government conducted extensive, painstaking and able educational work among men of letters with the aim of uniting their creative forces to promote the building of the new society and the education of the new man of that society.

An important document in this field was the Central Committee's resolution *On the Policy of the Party in the Sphere of Literature* published in July 1925. The resolution urged the necessity of gaining a firm position in the field of belle-lettres, and outlined concrete aims of work with each group of writers. The Central Committee demanded greater assistance for proletarian writers, who being the standard bearers of the advanced revolutionary ideology, still had to win for themselves the right to hegemony in literature. "Peasant writers must find a warm welcome and enjoy our unconditional support," stated the resolution. With regard to those writers of the old school who still wavered in their attitude to the revolutionary state, the Central Committee took the following line: "The general directive here is a tactful and solicitous approach, i.e., an approach which would ensure all conditions necessary for their earlier acceptance of Communist ideology."

In this and in all other decisions on literature the Communist Party demanded a determined fight against all trends and elements hostile to the people.

The work of the Party pursuant to this decision of the C. C. was highly fruitful. The successes of Socialist construction, strengthening the educational measures taken by the Party, had a triumphantly convincing effect on the literary intelligentsia. Men of letters showed more concerted and closer cooperation in the common work aimed towards Socialism.

By 1932 our literature had reached a stage warranting the formation of a Union of Soviet Writers the purpose of which was to unite the members of different literary groups and associations.

The "Russian Association of Proletarian Writers" (*RAPP*) was wound up. This association had in its time been founded to strengthen the position of proletarian writers in literature, to support them in their struggle against the influences of elements hostile to the proletariat. As the number of proletarian writers grew and the majority of our men of letters rallied round the aims of socialist construction, there was no longer any need for maintaining specific proletarian organizations. There was, furthermore, a danger that these organizations might become a medium for the cultivation of a certain "group isolationism" of something in the nature of "proletarian sectarianism" and thus hold aloof from those non-proletarian writers who, under the influence of the successes of Socialist construction and Party educational work, had come over to Socialism.

The winding up of the *RAPP* and the formation of the Union of Soviet Writers of the U.S.S.R., was one of the manifestations of the strengthening moral and political unity of the Soviet people, an expression of the unity between the people and literature.

The foundation of the Union of Soviet Writers, however, did not mean the elimination of all contradictions in literature or the cessation of writers' controversies and discussions. The contradictions between those writers who stood firmly on the platform of the Soviet power and those who wavered in their attitude towards Soviet power were eliminated by life itself which brought the main body of Soviet writers into the ranks of the fighters for Socialism. Controversies and discussions on literary questions, remained as one of the chief forms of the activity of the Union of Soviet Writers. These controversies and discussions, however, became free of such sentiments as "upholding the prestige of one's group," the "honour of the circle" and other manifestations of group isolationism or narrowness. Instead they became an efficient means of eliminating the shortcomings in literature, a medium for mutual comradely assistance between men of letters, an aid to the further growth and perfection of literature and of increasing its role in helping the state and the people build up a Socialist society. The unity between Soviet writers and the people was the natural outcome of the development of the writers, it was an expression of their inner freedom, a freedom based on an understanding of the community of their interests with those of the people.

Bourgeois literary critics often declare that Soviet writers cannot be free because they are dominated by the demands of the state. But what are the demands that dominate Soviet literature? The Soviet writer feels that he *must* propagate the just humane ideals of Socialist democracy, that his work *must* help realize his great ideals. The Soviet writer is conscious of the fact that he *must* promote the happiness of his people and his own happiness thereby. When the writer himself feels this, is it not the only real and genuine freedom?

In Socialist society the artist is one with the people, and the people have, at last, found their own artists to give sincere and full expression to their ideas, their spirit, their inmost thoughts, their lives — to help them to progress. The best writers of old, those who sensed so acutely the gap between dreams and reality, between poetry and truth, who felt their own factual isolation from the working people who had no access to culture, dreamed of this sort of unity with the people.

The ties between Soviet literature and the Soviet people were demonstrated with particular force during the recent war. When the Germans burned down the homes of Soviet people, murdered women, and hanged old men and children, the Soviet writer Wanda Wasilewska wrote her novel *Rainbow*. Every line in the book breathes hatred of the German fascists, the author's hatred and the Soviet people's hatred. In voicing freely her own feelings and thoughts, Wasilewska expressed the thoughts and feelings of her people. When the soldiers and officers of the Soviet Army defended their native land in the most fierce and bloody battles Constantine Simonov, himself with the army, wrote the play *Russian People*, the soldier-poet Alexander Tvardovsky composed the poem *Vassili Terkin*, a hymn to the inner beauty and courage of the Soviet man. In these works it is the voice of the soul, the voice of civic conscience that speaks.

If in those days, when the regiments and divisions of their army were fighting to the last drop of blood against a hated enemy, some John Lehmann had told Soviet authors to write, for the sake of "freedom of Art", "about the rambler rose against the garden wall and the kingfisher on the willow branch," and not about the war, they would have regarded him as a monstrosity. A writer's freedom means the right to freely express his thoughts and feelings. Soviet writers, citizens of their country, men with a clear conscience, wrote of what they felt and thought, about the sacred war, about the Captain Safonovs and Private Terkins who were fighting so fiercely for freedom. And those gentlemen who envisaged freedom in ignoring themes of war for the sake of roses and kingfishers, who blasphemously ignored the sufferings and heroism of the people were merely urging literature to desert the field of the just battle against fascism.

The free unity of Soviet literature with the people can be clearly illustrated by any theme taken from Soviet books. Take, for instance, the theme of labour, so prominent in Soviet writings. No literature of the past was devoted to labour and to the man of labour so fully or with such inspiration as Soviet literature.

The true pioneer of this theme in world literature was Maxim Gorky, whose works contain many unique, poetical passages devot-

ed to labour. Profoundly realizing that labour forms the basis of all material riches, without which the mental wealth of Leonardo da Vinci and Pushkin would have been impossible, Gorky envisaged in the work of ordinary people inspired poetry such as could only compare with the poetry of love. We frequently find descriptions of labour also in Gorky's pre-revolutionary works when the toil of the workers and peasants in Russia was forced and humiliated by exploitation. Gorky described working people who forgot for whom they were toiling, forgot their bestial existence when carried away by love of their craft. He showed how in such moments, simple working people oppressed and crushed by need, seemed to regain strength and beauty.

In a country where the working people do not toil for a capitalist master, where all the material wealth and profits created by labour are the common property of the people, labour becomes a matter of honour, glory and heroism. Soviet writers praise labour as man's creative self-expression and the foundation of human happiness. The theme of labour is one of state importance. Labour is affirmed and exalted in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., in the laws of the Government, in decrees on the award of orders to ever growing numbers of workers in different fields of endeavour. The State is vitally concerned that literature reflects and exalts the work of Soviet people.

Here the question may arise — do our authors write about labour by orders from the Government? No, they write about labour because, like the Government itself, they are vitally concerned in the successes of the constructive effort of the people. Soviet writers, in their outlook on the world and their psychology, are themselves working people. They voice the thoughts of the people because they themselves are part of the people. They fulfill the task set by the state because it is the common task of the state, the people and the writer, because the way of thinking of the Soviet writer himself has become of a state nature.

Joseph Stalin has called Soviet writers the engineers of human souls. This means that, guided by the method of Socialist realism, studying and portraying Soviet reality in its revolutionary development, our writers are fulfilling the vital task of educating and ideologically arming the people.

Soviet writers portray the best feelings and qualities of the Soviet man, depict that fight of the new against the old, in which the morrow of the Soviet citizen is to be seen. All this is important, not only because it gives an artistically integral and living picture of Soviet society, but because it awakens in people a taste for what is good and new, because it awakens their will to struggle, and rouses that sacred restlessness and active attitude towards life without which man becomes a limited and indifferent philistine.

Soviet literature has already created a number of lofty characters bringing inspiration to Soviet people in their work and efforts, helping to inculcate in the Soviet youth a spirit of cheerfulness and love of life, faith in man and in the people, confidence in their own strength. The character of Pavel Korchagin, one of the favourite heroes of pre-war literature (*How the Steel Was Tempered* by Nikolai Ostrovsky) helped to temper the steel of the hearts of the thousands of young Soviet soldiers who defeated German fascism. Amongst these were heroic boys and girls like Oleg Koshevoi, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, Alexander Matrosov, Ulyana Gromova who have themselves already become the heroes of new works of literature, exercising a tremendous educative influence upon our youth. The countless examples of heroes of labour, scientists, arctic explorers help to instill in Soviet people the high morals of toilers and patriots united in the constructive work of the Socialist society.

At the same time, Soviet literature very frequently shows Soviet people what they should not be, scourges the survivals of the past which hinder Soviet people in the onward march.

It is often asserted in the U.S.A. and Great Britain that Soviet literature, being allegedly controlled by the State, portrays only the positive sides of life and ignores all shortcomings. Such an invention can only find favour with readers who have not even the most elementary knowledge of Soviet literature.

Criticism and self-criticism are widely resorted to in the Soviet state—in the Communist Party, in the Soviets and in other organizations of the people. Criticism and self-criticism is the specific method used by Socialist society to reveal and overcome the contradictions of society, the struggle between the old and the new, between the moribund and the newborn.

"Our Soviet society contains no antagonistic classes; the struggle between old and new and consequently the development from a lower to a higher stage does not take the form of a struggle between antagonistic classes and of cataclysms as is the case under capitalism but it takes the form of criticism and self-criticism, the real motive force of our development and a powerful instrument in the hands of the Party. This is undoubtedly a new sort of movement, a new type of development, a new dialectical law of development." (A. Zhdanov)

The history of Soviet literature contains countless examples showing how literature helps the people to expose and overcome contradictions in the life of Socialist society, to condemn and eliminate everything obsolete and backward, everything that hampers progress. In the most difficult years of the war, the Soviet playwright Alexander Korneichuk wrote the drama *Front* in which those Soviet generals, including the commander of a front, who adhered to the time-established but obsolete methods of warfare were sharply, determinedly and vigorously criticized. In nearly every post-war work dedicated to Soviet life, we find this same passionate irreconcilability and criticism in portraying persons and phenomena that still bear the imprint of the obsolete. In Pavlenko's novel *Happiness*, for example, the figure of the secretary of the District Committee of the Party, Korytov, is a criticism of those Party workers whose proneness for red tape and routine prevents them from maintaining live contact with the people, and hinders them from noticing and supporting talented and progressive people.

Criticism and self-criticism are of great importance to literature itself, which is, naturally, governed by the same laws that determine the development of Soviet society as a whole. The unity of Soviet literature with the people, however, does not preclude the possibility of contradictions in literature itself. The fight between the old and the new manifests itself in many ways in the growth of Soviet literature. Criticism and self-criticism help to expose and eliminate these contradictions, help the progress of literature.

Zoshchenko's works, false in conception and devoid of ideas, were sharply criticized in the Soviet press. Zoshchenko, however, did not heed the criticism of the press, ignored the readers' demands and continued to write empty, idealess stories, slandering the Soviet people. Even the fires of the war did not touch this man, who remained amazingly indifferent to the fate of his people. During the war, Anna Akhmatova continued to write pessimistic, dispairing poems in the spirit of bourgeois decadence. Zoshchenko and Akhmatova had a negative influence upon the upbringing of Soviet youth, and their reactionary writings pulled backward the development of Soviet literature.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party, in its decision on the Leningrad magazines *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, sharply condemned these writers. The Soviet people and the Bolshevik Party helped our writers to overcome these obsolete phenomena that are alien to the growth of our literature and define more clearly and precisely the tasks of the post-war period.

Soviet periodicals and newspapers frequently publish reviews of literary works, sharply and decisively criticizing their shortcomings and rendering invaluable aid to Soviet writers. It's noteworthy that not only writers and professional critics take part in this work of the press. Readers — teachers, statesmen, scientists, workers, engineers, peasants, and soldiers frequently write to the newspapers on matters of literature. This may serve as an indication of the national importance attached to literature in the Soviet Union and of the interest in literature manifested by the people.

About a year ago, A. Zhdanov, one of the leaders of the Soviet people, told Soviet writers:

"Literature is something near and dear to the people. The people, therefore regard every one of your successes, every literary work of significance, as their own victory. For the same reason every good work of literature may be compared to a battle won, or to an important victory on the economic front. Every failure in Soviet literature, on the other hand, is distasteful and bitter to the people, the Party and the state."

The people elect the best Soviet writers to administrative and state posts. Many Soviet writers are ministers or deputies to the Supreme Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and of the Union republics.

Soviet writers are proud of this attitude of the state and the people towards literature. It shows that in freely expressing their own thoughts and feelings writers are also voicing those of the people and are helping the people to build up a new life and bring up a new man.

Many lying and slanderous articles and books about Soviet literature and its relations to the state have been written in capitalist countries, particularly of late. The attacks of most defamers of Soviet literature are launched under the banner of the defence of "freedom of art"; these critics shamelessly distort the truth in praising the "freedom of art" current in bourgeois society.

"It is impossible to live in society and remain free of it," wrote Lenin. The truth and wisdom of these words are confirmed by the entire history of mankind. It, therefore, follows that a writer's degree of freedom does not depend upon how loudly he proclaims this freedom but upon the social forces which he serves and his attitude towards them. A writer who serves the cause of social or national oppression, obviously cannot himself be free. A writer cannot be free who connives at discrimination against Negroes in the United States of America or who approves the bloody doings of the imperialists in Indonesia. An artist who serves the cause of enslavement of people (be they black or white) is himself doubly a slave. Only that artist is genuinely free who serves the cause of freedom, who serves a free society, or, if he belongs to a society not yet free, who takes part in the fight for the freedom of the people.

The deceptive glitter of bourgeois critics' talk of freedom cannot hide the true nature of the relations between bourgeois art and bourgeois society; nor can it hide, in particular, the fact that the reactionary critics who attack Soviet literature, who heap abuse and slander upon it, do so in servile obedience to the orders given by the imperialist bourgeoisie. To these critics, freedom of art is not a real state of existence but a platform. They use words about freedom either as a cudgel wherewith to attack Soviet writers or as a fig leaf to hide the shameful nudity of their slavish grovelling before the moneybags.

Incidentally, some British and American critics frequently state that the dependence of bourgeois society's literature on the moneybag is a tendentious fabrication of Marxist critics. There is no need for us to deny this assertion: it is sufficient merely to turn the pages of some American or British magazines to see how profoundly this dependence of literature on the moneybag troubles British and American writers themselves. And it must be added that complaints about the commerce that has invaded the sanctum sanctorum of art, are not only found on the pages of *Mainstream*, *New Masses*, *Our Time*, but even in such magazines as *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *Horizon*, *New Writing*, which can hardly be suspected of a critical attitude towards bourgeois society.

One of the most blatant and brazen sources of slander and abuse directed against Soviet literature is the magazine *Horizon*. When the Soviet press published the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, *Horizon* carried a special editorial devoted to Soviet literature (No. 82, October 1946.)

The editorial ends with a five-point conclusion which apparently is the esthetic and political credo of this magazine. We must deviate here to state that the style and tone of this credo surprised us not a little. We are accustomed to a more serious attitude in formulating questions of esthetics on the part of the veteran magazines of the country which, after Steele and Addison, produced a brilliant pleiad of literary critics and publicists. The journalists of the *Horizon* unashamedly replace reasoning and scientific analysis by a dubious glibness of style, and controversy by slander and abuse. However, the literary quality of the article is a matter of the editor's taste; we are not concerned here with *how*, but with *what* it writes.

In the first point of its credo, *Horizon* asserts:

"Better a 'State' which can't read or write than one which begins to take a positive interest in literature."

Having begun with such "anti-state nihilism," the cautious authors of the editorial hasten to prove their "respectability"—they speak of their capitalist state as being a "well-meaning and as yet inoffensive little Hercules" encouraging art for art's sake. "Anti-state nihilism," evidently, is only a mask, for *Horizon* does not attack states in general, but only the state which supports the art of Socialist realism. *Horizon* exposes its political cards when it recommends going "once more into the breach against the Soviet view." The fact that *Horizon*'s writers are dependent on the purses of their patrons is made clear by the political tendency of the editorial on "freedom of art."

What, however, is the positive content of the conception of "freedom of art," preached by *Horizon* critics? Art, according to *Horizon* is a product "of internal conflict in the subconscious. The artist is a self-cured neurotic—the origins of Art are not in the state but in the family, and the golden recipe for Art is the ferment of an unhappy childhood working through a noble imagination."

The *Horizon* esthetes apparently set themselves the absurd and ridiculous aim of entrusting the fate of a literature that had produced Shakespeare and Dickens to neurasthenics suffering from a mental trauma resulting from an unhappy childhood and living in a subconscious world! How low must they have fallen who offer literature such delirium as a program for "freedom of art."

The practice and experience of the development of modern bourgeois literature, however, tells us that this fall has its social logics. The article cited from *Horizon* is a sufficient example of the reactionary, anti-Soviet tendencies underlying this talk about keeping art free from any state interference. The course taken by modern bourgeois writers shows the profoundly anti-democratic nature of literature that acclaims the reactionary, decadent ideas and conceptions of bourgeois individualism, that seeks to distract the attention of the people from political and social problems, that tries to fill their minds with the poison of pessimism and mysticism, the poison of disbelief in the strength and abilities of ordinary people to change the surrounding life.

The history of recent years provides us with countless examples from life revealing the true social content of the conception of individualistic art. We know, for instance, that before the war André Gide was one of the leading theorists on the "freedom of art" and a protagonist of bourgeois individualism.

"Without freedom, art loses its significance and perishes," he wrote in 1936 in his book *The Return From the U.S.S.R.* Gide ranted about the "inestimable freedom of art," about the freedom of individuality, he calumnied the Soviet Union, accusing the Soviet Government of restricting the freedom of the individual, the freedom of art.

Then war came. Ideas and principles had to stand their trial before the great tribunal of history. And what happened? It became evident that the freedom preached by André Gide could not inspire its adepts to fight against the fascist enemies of freedom. The philosophy of bourgeois individualism was the preparatory class for collaborationism. The war showed that the defenders and saviours of freedom were the heroic soldiers of the Soviet people about whose "lack of freedom" André Gide had written so calumniously. And this prophet of individualistic "freedom" wrote in his diary during the years when France was groaning under the heel of the invaders:

"To be reconciled with yesterday's foe is not cowardice but common sense, the acceptance of the inevitable... He who defies fate falls into a snare. Why injure yourself against the bars of your cage? To suffer least from the confined space of the cell it is best to stand quietly—in the middle of it...."

And further:

"Oppression cannot humiliate the best, and the others don't matter... Long live the suppressed thought. The spirit achieves its highest virtue in times when there is the least freedom."

These shameful lines were also written in the name of "freedom", one is to suppose. André Gide sought to convince himself and others that the captive of fascism, who sits meekly in the middle of his cell and calls others to meekness, is freer than the fighter who, having been captured, does not fear to wound his hands against the bars of his cell in an attempt to loosen them and bring nearer the hour of liberty.

In the days when grim danger threatened his country and his people, this bard of "freedom" and bourgeois individualism became the bard of "suppressed thought" and found himself in one camp with Laval. André Gide, however, did not share the fate of the man with the white tie and the black soul—he escaped the deserved punishment. Moreover, after the war he received an honorary degree of one of the oldest British universities. And it is said that none blushed during the ignoble ceremony of crowning the traitor.

André Gide's case is not the only one of its kind.

In the countries that did not suffer the horrors of enemy invasion there were many

writers preaching "freedom of art" and "art for art's sake" who proved to be spiritual bankrupts in the time of mortal struggle with fascism. True they did not make such an open and shameless appeal for treason as André Gide did, but still they hindered rather than helped their people in the fight against fascism.

The British critic, John Lehmann boasted during the war that he and his fellow-thinkers have "held passionately to their right to be critical, to be antinomian, to be gloomy when they should have been enthusiastic, to write about the rambler rose against the garden wall and the kingfisher on the willow branch, the sensual dreams of their mistress, the monster-minute drama of their childhood and schooldays and everything else that had no immediate connection with the war. . . ."

According to Lehmann, the "sacred freedom of the artist" means monstrous indifference on the part of the writer to the fate of his people in the hour of mortal danger, the actual refusal of art and the artist to participate in the war against fascism. True, Lehmann writes that "free" and "sceptical" verses about the rose were a challenge to fascist conformism; but this dodge, meant as a mask, cannot hide the true fact that Lehmann's "esthetics" is that of a deserter. The "freedom" of Mr. Lehmann and his ilk is the freedom of the artist from his duty to his people, from his conscience.

In unison with Lehmann, Osbert Sitwell complains bitterly in *New Writing and Daylight* (No. VII, 1946) that during the war the people wanted stories "of war-fortitude, about bomb shelters, bombs and overcrowded trains." Sitwell considers that these demands must be ignored by the artist who, if even for a time, must retreat to his "ivory tower", there "to write, to think, to breathe." The patriotic sentiments of the readers also arouse Sitwell's indignation because they "led the world to dismiss Céline, who is a very great writer." Here again, solicitude for the "freedom of art" goes hand in hand with praise for a traitor and fascist lackey.

Bourgeois individualistic literature proved impotent in the fight against fascism. A bitter confession of this rings through David Cohn's article in *Saturday Review of Literature* (No. 3, 1947), entitled *Should Fighting Men Think?* The American critic writes that American soldiers did not know what they were fighting for, that literature and the press did not arm them spiritually, did not arouse in them social consciousness for an understanding of the just aims of the fight against fascism.

In post-war years, the bourgeois individualistic literature and philosophy—from the eroticism of Henry Miller to the artifices of Sartre's existentialist sophistry are actively impressing on readers ideas of scepticism and pessimism, sowing disbelief in man under cover of a panegyric to abstract "freedom of individuality." This literature seeks to divert the attention of the nations from problems of the fight for genuine freedom, it strives to disarm the man in the street morally by showing him the uselessness of any conscious efforts to change life.

Such literature is supported, published and advertised in capitalist countries even where its representatives flaunt anti-bourgeois phraseology. And this is not accidental. No matter in what form the work of bourgeois individualists is vested, it serves the cause of enslaving man, the cause of reaction, it is dependent on the society which has given it birth. "The freedom of the bourgeois writer, artist, actress is only a masked (or hypocritically disguised) dependence on the moneybag, bribery, maintenance." (V. I. Lenin).

Amongst bourgeois critics of Soviet literature, in addition to deliberate and malicious slanderers of the type of Struve, Eastman or *Horizon* journalists, there are critics whose writings lack truth owing to ignorance, owing to their failure to understand the new and specific nature of Soviet literature. Measuring all literary phenomena with the yardstick of bourgeois society and their own psychology, they regard any dependence or service (no matter to what state or social forces) as a sign of slavery on the part of literature. They apply their own actual position, their own slavish dependence on the moneybag, on their capitalist masters, to their understanding of other literatures. They forget that the service of freedom can never be slavery; they cannot understand that if the Soviet writer thinks in a state way, if he is utterly devoted to the people, he must inevitably write in the spirit of Socialist realism, and herein lies his greatest freedom—the freedom to write what he thinks and feels.

We have already said above that for the Soviet author to write during the war as John Lehmann says, would have been monstrous self-distortion and a denial of his inner freedom. The great Russian democrat Nikolai Chernyshevsky once wrote to the poet Nikolai Nekrasov: "Freedom of poetry does not mean writing about Black Magic or bagatelles like Fet . . . but it means not allowing random pretensions to hamper your talent. Fet would have been hidebound had he decided to write on social problems and he would have produced rubbish; Maikov is equally hidebound whatever he writes about—everything is written to order—anthological verses, *Two Fates* and *Clermont Cathedral*. Gogol was absolutely free when he wrote *Inspector General* —his talent leans towards *Inspector General*". . . .

Soviet writers are free because their talent leans towards Socialist realism, because both in life and in literature they are sons of their people, citizens and patriots of their country.

ALEXANDER KARAGANOV

THIRTY YEARS OF SOVIET CULTURE

FACTS AND FIGURES

During the Soviet period a veritable cultural revolution has taken place in Russia. There has been a great rise in the cultural standard of the people, and tremendous development in public education. These achievements are the natural outcome of the Socialist system, "the constant rise of the political and cultural level of the people constitutes a vital need of the Soviet order." (A. Zhdanov).

Soviet culture is a component part of the general affairs of state and it has developed along with socialist construction, the victories of Stalin's five-year plans, reflecting the political, social and economic gains of the Soviet people. Soviet culture is the culture of millions of working people.

For many centuries before the October Revolution, the ruling and exploiting classes impeded in every conceivable way the spiritual growth of the great labouring masses of Russia. In 1913 Lenin wrote: "Four-fifths of the younger generation are doomed to illiteracy by the feudal order of Russia." Only a little over 2 per cent of the women could read and write in tsarist Russia. In some of the provinces (Russian Central Asia, Siberia) over 95 per cent of the population was illiterate. Tsarism quite openly retarded the development of public education. At the end of the 19th century, the budget of an elementary school in Russia averaged to no more than 200 rubles a year, of which 150 rubles went for the teacher's salary and the remainder—50 rubles—for the maintenance of the building, for teaching aids, etc. The entire budget for public education of this vast country amounted to no more than the miserable sum of 25-28 million rubles per year.

With bitter regret the authors of *Public Education in Russia*, a book which appeared in 1908 stated: " . . . every year millions and millions of extra rubles are found for anything you please, except public education . . . literacy among our population is not only in an utterly feeble state, but, what is, perhaps, more important, it progresses at such a snail's pace that if this state of things is to persist, universal literacy is hardly to be expected before the end of the next century."

This bleak prophecy did not come true only because the October Revolution opened up before the peoples of the U.S.S.R. every possibility for cultural development and roused among the masses an insatiable yearning for culture, science and art. With the organization of a large network of schools, courses and classes with free tuition, illiteracy in the U.S.S.R. was almost wholly abolished. "We want," said Joseph Stalin, "all our workers and peasants to be cultured and educated. . . ."

Compulsory elementary education in the native vernacular is being carried into effect in this country and universal secondary education is to be realized in the very near future.

Expenditure on education amounted to 157,800,000 rubles in 1928-1929, to 4,617,000,000 in 1938, and 38,100,000,000 in 1946 while in 1947 budget appropriations for education total almost 53,000,000,000 rubles.

In 1914-1915 there were 105,524 schools in Russia with an attendance of 7,896,249 children. In the 1938-1939 school year the number of schools had reached 171,579 and the number of pupils 31,517,375. According to the law on the five-year plan for the reconstruction and development of the national economy of the U.S.S.R. there are to be 193,000 schools by 1950 while attendance is to reach 31,800,000.

Some 591,000 children are this year in attendance in the schools of Moscow alone.

In pre-revolutionary Russia there were 91 colleges and universities with a student body of 112,000. Today the U.S.S.R. boasts of 792 colleges and universities with 670,000 students in attendance.

The following figures show how the publication of printed matter has grown in the U.S.S.R.

The year 1913 saw the publication of some 26,174 books in Russian with a total number of 86,750,000 copies. In 1939 nearly 45,000 were published, the total number of copies running into 700,000,000.

After the Revolution books in the languages of 40 peoples which formerly had no alphabets of their own first appeared.

In 1913 Russia published 859 newspapers with a daily circulation of 2,700,000 copies. Already in 1939 nearly 9,000 newspapers were issued in the U.S.S.R., the number of daily copies running into 39,000,000. Before the Patriotic War books and newspapers in the U.S.S.R. were printed in 111 languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union. The different nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union were thus enabled to read in their own languages.

Nearly 11,000,000,000 copies of books have been published in this country during the 30 years of Soviet rule.

Great attention is paid in the Soviet Union to the cultural demands of the young generation. The U.S.S.R. boasts of the only publishing house of children's books—*Detgiz*—in the world. This publishing house was founded in 1933 on the initiative of Maxim Gorky. Since its inception it has released 3,500 titles, with a total publication of 300 million copies. In 1946 alone 236 titles with a total of over 13,096,000 copies were released.

The popularity of the books issued by this

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publishing house is evidenced by the fact that in 1946 the *Children's Publishing House* received 24,000 letters from its young readers and only in the first half of 1947—20,000 letters.

The number of copies in which the works of Russian, West-European and Oriental classics are printed has increased manifold.

In the three decades preceding the October Revolution (1888-1917) the works of Pushkin ran into 10,711,000 copies, Leo Tolstoy—10,784,000, Chekhov—672,000, Gorky—1,083,000, Shakespeare—733,000, Balzac—114,000, and Dickens—1,053,000.

In the thirty years of Soviet rule the works of the same authors appeared as follows:

Pushkin	35,400,000	copies
L. Tolstoy	26,500,000	"
Chekhov	18,400,000	"
Gorky	44,600,000	"
Shakespeare	1,611,000	"
Balzac	2,065,000	"
Dickens	2,287,000	"

The books of leading Soviet writers have extremely large printings. Thus, Alexander Fadeyev's works run into 5,287,000 copies, Vladimir Mayakovsky's into 9,317,000, Mikhail Sholokhov's—15,849,000 copies.

Marx's and Engels' works run into 40,000,000 copies, of which 3,400,000 are in the languages of the non-Russian nationalities of the U.S.S.R. Lenin's and Stalin's works in the U.S.S.R. run into more than 682,000,000 copies.

During the years of the Soviet period the network of libraries has greatly expanded and the number of books in them have grown tremendously. The number of readers has greatly increased, too, and methods of serving their needs have improved. The Soviet Government has placed the country's libraries at the service of the people and transformed them into genuine shrines of culture and learning.

In 1914 tsarist Russia had 12,600 public libraries with a total of 8,900,000 volumes. In 1929 the U.S.S.R. boasted 28,864 libraries possessing 72,165,000 volumes and in 1939—77,590 libraries stocked with 146,802,900 volumes. By 1950, the number of club houses (each with a library of its own) and public libraries in Soviet towns and villages is to reach 284,900.

At the present time there are in Moscow alone 2,253 libraries possessing 64,080,000 volumes. Before the Revolution Moscow had no more than 13 libraries.

The Soviet Union's largest library is the Lenin Library in Moscow. Before the Revolution its collection consisted of 1,064,000 books and magazines. At the present time this library's repositories contain 10 million books and magazines and newspaper annual files. However, the library today is proud not only of its large collection. Lenin wrote that "the pride and glory of a public library are not in the number of its rare books, its 16th-century editions or 10th-century manuscripts but in *how widely* its books are circulated *among the people*, in the number of new readers it has won, in how efficiently all readers' requests for books are met, in the number of books lent to readers, in the number of children attracted to the library and making use of it. . . ."

In 1940, the Lenin Library, for example, issued four million books to readers; 826,400 persons visited its reading rooms.

The cinema, a mighty factor in raising the cultural level of the masses, has become the most popular form of art. Artistic films, popular science films and documentaries are shown daily to millions of Soviet picturegoers.

In 1915 tsarist Russia possessed 1,412 cinema installations; of which 133 were in rural areas.

In the U.S.S.R. in 1929 there were 9,698 cinema installations, in 1939 there were 30,919 of which 18,802 were in rural districts (i.e., there were then 141.4 times as many cinemas in the countryside as in the pre-revolutionary period). By 1950 there will be a total of 46,700 cinemas in the U.S.S.R.

The making of Soviet theatre history began in the very first days of the October Revolution. On the third day after the Revolution—November 9, 1917—the People's Commissariat for Education (headed by Anatoli Lunacharsky) was formed, and along with other cultural institutions, the theatres of Moscow and Petrograd (Leningrad) came under its jurisdiction.

All that was best and genuinely artistic in the old "classic heritage," received the energetic support of the Soviets, which eagerly accepted the noblest traditions of the Russian theatre—its political significance, educational value, its realism and affinity with the people's interests. Most representatives of the old theatre chose the path of friendly collaboration with the Soviets.

By a special ukase of the Commissariat for Education issued in November, 1918, art workers were exempt from obligatory labour service for which the whole of the urban population was mobilized in the time of sore trial for the republic—the period of economic ruin and Civil War.

By a law on "the organization of theatre management" passed in August 1919, private theatre enterprises ceased to exist, the maintenance of all theatres—metropolitan and provincial—was taken over by the state, and theatre companies came directly under the Commissariat for Education (since 1936 theatres have been under the Arts Committee).

Since the very first months of Soviet power the theatre became accessible to the masses. Special performances were organized for factory workers, and thirty per cent of the seating capacity of all playhouses was permanently reserved for audiences of Red Army men. Tours of theatre companies and individual actors were regularly arranged in workers' localities, at recruiting stations and on the Civil War fronts; joint discussions on the performances presented were held between actors and audiences.

The Soviet theatre rapidly gained popularity with the masses that no other theatre in the world enjoys. The remotest spots in the U.S.S.R. have played host to touring

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companies and have amateur groups of their own. In 1946 alone, for example, Soviet theatres performed to audiences totalling 58;105,700.

The early performances of Soviet theatres were replete with heroics, imbued with the lofty romanticism of the Revolution.

Vladimir Mayakovsky's *Mystère Bouffe*, a stirring, political play, had its première in the Grand Hall of the Petrograd Conservatory on November 7, 1918, in honour of the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. The play was directed by the author who also took part in the performance.

On May 1st, 1919, International Workers' Day, Kiev saw the première of Lope de Vega's popular tragedy *Fuente Ovejuna*. The play, which seemed to reflect the revolutionary battles of the period, ran for forty-two days consecutively and was invariably met with enthusiasm; the people would burst into revolutionary songs, and long after the performance was over continue singing in the blacked-out streets of Kiev—the battle line was but a short distance away.

A new theatre called the Grand Theatre of the Drama was founded in Petrograd on February 15, 1919. Gorky, People's Commissar Lunacharsky, the poet Blok, and the actors Monakhov and Yuriev were its founders. It was a theatre of classic tragedy.

In 1922, the Theatre of the Revolution, a theatre presenting progressive contemporary plays, was founded in Moscow, and was the first to present a large number of Soviet plays.

The years between 1917 and 1922 were a period of rapid development of the Soviet theatre, with new companies springing up everywhere, in towns, workers' districts, in the national republics, in villages, and particularly at the frontlines and in Red Army units. According to the figures provided by the Political Department of the Red Army there were 1,210 theatre groups and 911 dramatic circles in the Red Army in 1920.

In the years immediately following the Revolution, there was a marked development of amateur theatricals among the workers and peasants, alongside the professional theatre.

The tendency of the masses to favour a heroic and monumental art found vivid expression in the organization of mass festivals, particularly popular in Petrograd in 1918-1920 when they were held in commemoration of revolutionary events. Large scale theatricalized scenes shown in the streets and squares recreated chapters from the history of the revolutionary struggle.

Amateur activities in the Soviet Union became more widespread from year to year, gaining in depth, seriousness and content. It was on July 6, 1932, that the first Olympiad of amateur theatrical groups from all over the U S S.R took place and since then reviews, festivals and contests of amateur groups have been held regularly. In 1945, for example, a festival of the rural talent of the Russian Federation took place, in which 879,406 individual performers and 64,392 organized groups participated. The extensive chain of clubs and folk art centres scattered all over the Soviet Union helps to develop amateur activities. A Folk Art Theatre founded in Moscow in 1936 has brought to the fore some of the finest home talent in the country.

Soviet theatrical art is continually expanding in genre and variety of form. New companies are being formed and new playhouses built. Before the Revolution there were only 153 theatre companies in Russia. These were located exclusively in the large towns and as a rule performed in Russian. In 1933, the number of theatres in the Soviet Union had increased to 551 and by January 1, 1947, to 785. Today 379 theatres perform in the towns and villages of the Russian Federation alone. Of the total number of 785 theatre groups, 421 perform in Russian and the remainder in the languages of the other peoples of the U.S.S.R.

At present there are 539 theatre buildings in the Soviet Union. Nazi-wrecked theatre buildings are being rebuilt and new theatres erected. By the end of 1950, the number of theatre houses is to reach 898.

In 1939 the Soviet Union's theatres had a total seating capacity of 242,643 and, if mobile theatres are included, the total is 390,000. In the year 1938, for example, the theatres of the U.S.S.R. gave 157,113 performances drawing audiences of 78,192,400 theatregoers.

The scope of Soviet theatrical activities is a broad one, comprising drama, opera, ballet, juvenile theatres, puppet shows, collective farm and state farm theatre companies, army dramatic groups in the units of the Soviet Army, touring companies and railwaymen's theatres.

Thirty years of Soviet rule have seen extraordinary progress in the development of the national theatres of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

Prior to 1917, even such major national groups as the Armenians, Tajiks, Turkmenians and Kirghiz had no professional theatres. Even Belorussia had no resident theatre, not to speak of the numerous national minorities. Today 29 theatre companies perform in Armenia and 11 in Turkmenia. In 1946 Georgia boasted 40 theatre companies, Kazakhstan—42, Azerbaijan—28, Tajikistan—17, the Ukraine—103, Uzbekistan—40.

Exchange of experience between the peoples of the Soviet Union is widely practised in the theatre. The first Olympiad of the art of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. was held in Moscow in June, 1930, with representatives of 23 nationalities taking part. A festival of Ukrainian art was held in Moscow in 1936 and it was followed by festivals of Kazakh, Georgian, Uzbek, Kirghiz, Azerbaijan, Armenian, Belorussian, Tajik and Buryat-Mongolian national art.

During the Soviet period the national theatres gave rise to a number of stage celebrities who are now widely known in the Soviet Union. There are 25 actors of the non-Russian nationalities upon whom the title of People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. has been conferred.

There were no theatres in tsarist Russia catering for children, who had to be content with occasional matinees.

As early as 1918, a Children's Theatre Department was set up under the People's Commissariat for Education. By 1937, there were 89 theatres for juveniles, including puppet theatres and theatres of the young spectator. By January 1, 1947, the number of children's theatres had risen to 146—among them 45 theatres for young spectators and 101 puppet theatres.

Theatre companies performing on collective and state farms have become widely popular. The first of this kind came into being in the town of Venev, Moscow Region, in 1934. Before such companies were organized, however, the peasants, and, later, collective farmers in the Soviet Union were regularly visited by touring companies and teams of actors. In the middle thirties, the organization of collective farm theatres took on a mass character.

In February, 1936, the first festival of collective farm theatres of Moscow Region was held and in 1939 a country-wide review of collective farm theatres took place in Moscow. Over two hundred such theatres performed in the Soviet Union before the war.

Prior to 1917, dramatic schools existed only under the auspices of the large metropolitan—the "imperial"—theatres. After the October Revolution theatrical education was made possible for all aspiring to a stage career.

In 1937 four institutes of theatrical art (in Moscow, Leningrad, Tbilisi and Kiev) and 48 secondary theatrical schools were functioning in the Soviet Union, studies being conducted in a number of languages, with students of 62 nationalities attending.

By January 1, 1947, youthful aspirants to the stage already had access to fourteen institutes—among them the Estonian, Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijanian, Central Asian, two Ukrainian and the Belorussian institutes. There has also been a considerable increase in the number of secondary schools of theatre arts and crafts: in 1946 there were 112 theatre studios, 16 choreographic schools, 8 drama schools, 2 circus schools, and a theatre crafts school, training propertymen, decorators, costumiers and other theatre craftsmen.

During the recent war our fighting men were provided with regular entertainment by Soviet theatre companies. On the very first day of Germany's predatory attack on the Soviet Union, a hastily organized actors' team from the Central Soviet Army Theatre went to the front.

In those days countless requests from individual actors and from companies to be sent to the front reached the Arts Committee from all over the Soviet Union.

A number of permanent frontline companies were in existence in the beginning of 1942. These were either independent groups or affiliated branches of large resident companies: a branch of the Moscow Maly Theatre, a branch of the Vakhtangov Theatre, four frontline theatres sponsored by the Theatrical Society of the R.S.F.S.R., a Theatre of Frontline Miniature, the *Yastrebok* Propaganda Theatre—all performed to the very end of the war.

Many Soviet actors were decorated for their services with the frontline theatres.

Soviet people have a high esteem for theatre workers. This has been expressed in the decorations awarded to leading personalities of the Soviet theatre, and the high titles of People's Artist and Merited Artist conferred on them. A number of theatre workers have won Stalin Prizes. Some of them are members of the government, deputies to the Supreme Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and the constituent and autonomous republics: Akaki Khorava, a People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. (Georgia), Nikolai Cherkassov, a People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. (Leningrad), opera singer Vera Davydova, a Merited Artiste of the Republic (Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow) and others. Streets, theatres, schools and libraries have been named in honour of famous actors. In Moscow there are streets named after Stanislavsky, Nemirovich-Danchenko, Shchukin, Khmelev, Moskvin and others.

All Soviet theatres have given special attention this year to the production of plays devoted to contemporary Soviet life, the life of a victorious people engaged in the building up of the post-war world. At the same time, Soviet theatre companies are continuing their work on the classic repertoire, featuring the finest works of Russian and West-European drama. Among the interesting plays dealing with contemporary life are: *The Victors*, *Far From Stalingrad*, *Old Friends*, and others.

In the Soviet period, musical art has achieved great successes and become widely accessible to the masses of the people.

Never before have operas, concerts and other musical performances gather such large audiences.

Public concerts first began in Russia in the 18th century. In the early 19th century concerts became a regular feature, especially in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The comparatively early popularity of the musical concert was marked by a number of interesting events.

However, the concerts available to the general public were comparatively rare in old Russia and in such huge territories as Siberia and Central Asia concerts were the exception and not the rule. The only musicians in these districts were amateurs; professional musicians never got so far away from the big cities.

No comparison, therefore, can be made with the present concert arrangement. The following figures for Moscow give a good idea of what has been done in the past thirty years. In 1913 there were 5 concert halls in the city which gave a total of about 100 concerts. In 1946 there were 73 concert halls, including those in clubs, scientific and art associations and army units, in which 2,500 concerts were given, attended by a total audience of 3 million.

Great activity in this field began immediately after the Revolution, when a new audience entered the concert hall. Concerts and concert-lectures of an educational character were of almost daily occurrence.

Their aim was to raise the general cultural

level of the masses and satisfy their urgent need for art.

Since then there has been a steady growth of concert activities. In 1940 there were over 90 thousand advertised public concerts in the U.S.S.R.: by 1946 the number had increased to 120 thousand concerts heard by audiences totalling about 40 million people.

Soviet music reflects the specific national features of the culture of the peoples inhabiting the various republics. In the R.S.F.S.R. there are many Russian song choruses and orchestras of folk instruments: similar ensembles have been organized in all the republics, including the Central Asian and Transcaucasian. In 1940 there were 154 philharmonic ensembles in the U.S.S.R.; today their number totals over 200. Some of these are in towns far from the centre of the country—in Alma-Ata, Frunze and Stalinabad, for example.

The repertoires of the philharmonics are rich and varied. The gems of world music may be heard at Soviet concerts, a prominent place being given to Soviet and Russian classical music. The monumental concert—oratorio, cantata and opera *en frac*—are also very popular. Some of the concerts given during Moscow's last two seasons were the *Requiem* of Mozart, Cherubini, Berlioz and Verdi, Handel's *Samson* and Bach's *Missa Solemnis*.

A great number of brilliant musicians have appeared in the Soviet period; the regularly held competitions for performers in all genres have played an important part in bringing many of these musicians to prominence. There were musical competitions in old Russia, too, but at the very best they attracted a couple of dozen performers in some particular field—mostly piano or violin. Musical competitions are now run by the state which grudges neither effort nor money on them. They are usually held in three rounds. In the last competition of the U.S.S.R. (1945) the first round—regional—was held simultaneously in Moscow, Leningrad, the capitals of all the constituent republics and a number of large towns in the R.S.F.S.R. Everything possible was done to encourage entrants. About 1,000 young performers took part, over 200 of these, having passed the first tests, assembled in Moscow for the second round. Long before the first round those who were studying or working were granted long leaves (with pay or students' stipends), so that they could practise. Non-Moscovites taking part in the second and third rounds were lodged and boarded by the state while in the city, and their travelling expenses were paid; vocalists and string performers were provided free of charge with competent accompanists. In the third round those performers who appeared with orchestral accompaniment were supported by Moscow's leading symphony orchestras.

There were many similar competitions before the war: in 1933 (Moscow) and 1935 (Leningrad), the latter including pianists, vocalists, and performers on every known string and wind instrument. In 1937 there was a competition of the U.S.S.R. for pianists, violinists and 'cellists in Moscow, in 1938 a competition for conductors and one for string quartettes and in 1939 a competition for variety artists.

The total number of prize winners in all these competitions already exceeds one hundred and amongst them we find such famous artists as the pianists Emil Gilels, Yakov Fliere, Svyatoslav Richter, and Victor Merzhanov, the violinist David Oistrakh and the conductor Evgeni Mravinsky.

Quite a number of Soviet competition winners have also gained prizes in international contests. The series of Soviet musical victories opened in 1926 when nineteen-year-old Lev Oborin took first prize at the International Chopin Festival in Warsaw. In 1935 Yakov Fliere took first prize at the pianists' contest in Vienna, in 1937 Emil Gilels won a first prize at the Ysaye contest in Brussels, in 1938 Yakov Zak took first place at the 3rd Chopin Festival in Warsaw and in that same year David Oistrakh won first prize in the international violinists' contest in Brussels. At the Prague Youth Festival in 1947 a large group of Soviet performers won first prizes.

An important feature of Soviet musical history is the development of the opera amongst peoples who hardly knew the word before the Revolution. The first national Uzbek, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Tajik, Buryat-Mongolian and Bashkir operas were written in the middle thirties. During the war the first Turkmenian opera appeared, sung by Turkmenian professional singers and performed in Ashkhabad in the first Turkmenian Opera House.

These new opera theatres produce their own native operas and also those of the classics. Chaikovsky's *Evgeni Onegin*, for example, has appeared on the stage of almost all the opera houses of Central Asia, with the text translated into native languages. In the capitals of the constituent republics, as in Tashkent, for example, there are national and Russian opera companies, each with its own theatre.

In many small towns and in distant spots where there are not sufficient performers to maintain separate dramatic and musical theatres there are mixed theatres which include all genres in their repertoires. These mixed theatres are to be found in the most unexpected places—for example, there is one in Khorog, in the Pamirs, on the world's highest plateau.

Soviet composers, musicologists and music critics of all the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. have an organization of their own—the Union of Soviet Composers founded in 1932.

Latest figures put its membership at 1,108 people—in Moscow and in the 45 local unions in Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Kiev, Alma-Ata, Tallinn, Tbilisi, Ulan-Ude, Kishenev, etc. The chairman of the union is Reingold Gliere, one of the oldest Soviet composers, and its presidium includes such famous musicians as Aram Khachaturyan, Dmitri Shostakovich, Nikolai Myaskovsky, Vissarion Shebalin, the musicologist Aca-

The new building of Lenin Library in Moscow

demician Boris Asafiev (Igor Glebov), and others.

The union has helped build up the young schools of symphony music and opera in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, in the Central Asian republics, the Volga district and the Far East. It was the Union of Soviet Composers that brought up the contingent of musicians from the peoples whose only music before the Revolution were folk songs—Tajiks, Buryat-Mongolians, Marii, Bashkirs and others.

Any composer, be he famous musician or raw beginner, is sure that his compositions will be heard by the union and, if they are worthy of it, that the union will see that they are published and performed.

The union plays its special part in the organization of concerts and in the work of the State Music Publishers. In the 1946-47 season the union arranged in Moscow a series of ten symphonic concerts composed exclusively of new works; these were in addition to the regular programs which also contain a big share of Soviet works. Compositions by Georgian, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian musicians were included in the series. Another side of the union's work is the organization of festivals of national music for the various constituent and autonomous republics of the Soviet Union. During the war there was the Tashkent festival for all Central Asia, the Tbilisi festival for the Transcaucasus and the Kiev festival organized immediately after the liberation of the city. Since the war there has been a music festival in Tallinn, Estonia.

To help provide favourable conditions for the work of composers the union maintains a Music Fund, the budget of which is made up from royalties it receives from concerts. In 1947 the Fund reached 25 million rubles. The Music Fund pays pensions to the union's members in old age and in time of incapacity due to illness. The union has a ten-storey house in Moscow in which the leading composers live. This building contains the offices of the Presidium of the Union, the Central Composers' Club with a concert hall and a rich musical library. The union's Music Fund maintains "Composers' Houses" in the country where musicians may work in quiet and comfort, has a number of summer and winter sanatoriums and a publishing house of its own.

MOSCOW 800th BIRTHDAY

LITERARY MOSCOW

In 1147, on a high hill girded by a river, Prince Yuri Dolgoruky founded the fortress city of Moscow.

Ivan Kalita moved the seat of the Grand Princedom from Vladimir to Moscow in 1328, and from then on Moscow developed as the capital of the Russian state and the true centre of Russian arts and letters.

In the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries Moscow was gradually accumulating the treasures of Russian culture. During this period on the basis of sundry chronicles, the first annals of Russia were written here. It was in Moscow that Andrei Rublev, the great painter, laid the foundation of the Russian school of art, and the Moscow builders developed the Russian style in architecture.

Russia's first printed book—*The Apostle*—was published in Moscow, in 1564, by Ivan Fyodorov, Russia's first printer, a monument to whom now stands in one of the central squares of the city. In Moscow appeared the first Russian textbooks—Smotritsky's *Grammar* and Magnitsky's *Arithmetic*. Russia's first newspaper *Vedomosti* appeared in Moscow on January 2, 1703.

The first court theatre in Russia was opened in Moscow in 1672 and thirty years later Peter I inaugurated a public theatre erecting the *Home of Comedy* on the Red Square in Moscow.

In January 1731, Mikhail Lomonosov, then a nineteen-year-old youth, came to Moscow from Kholmogory in the distant north, to take up studies at the Old Slavonic-Greek and Latin Academy. Lomonosov, who became a great scholar and poet, was destined to found Russia's first university in Moscow in 1755, and was, according to Pushkin, "our first university in himself."

Nikolai Novikov, the great Russian educator, worked in Moscow. He preached the idea that "the sciences love liberty and spread best where thought is freest" and made his life's aim "the free dissemination of knowledge" among the people. It was he who inaugurated the Printers' Company in Moscow drawing into it the best scholars of the time. The company supplied the remotest parts of the country backwoods with printed matter—textbooks, dictionaries, treatises on history, geography and natural science. Novikov, too, opened the first public library and reading room in Moscow.

At the end of 1779, Novikov founded Russia's first educational society—the "Fellowship of Scientists." Under the auspices of this society three seminars, one on the art of translation, the other on pedagogics and the third on philology, were inaugurated at Moscow University. This society provided the means for young talented people in the provinces, eager for knowledge, to study at Moscow University.

In 1791-1792 Nikolai Karamzin, a fosterling of the "Fellowship" published the *Moscow Journal* in which he printed his *Poor Liza*, the first Russian novel to be written in a style free from the stiltedness of church Slavonic. The budding literary talents of the time rallied around Karamzin in Moscow.

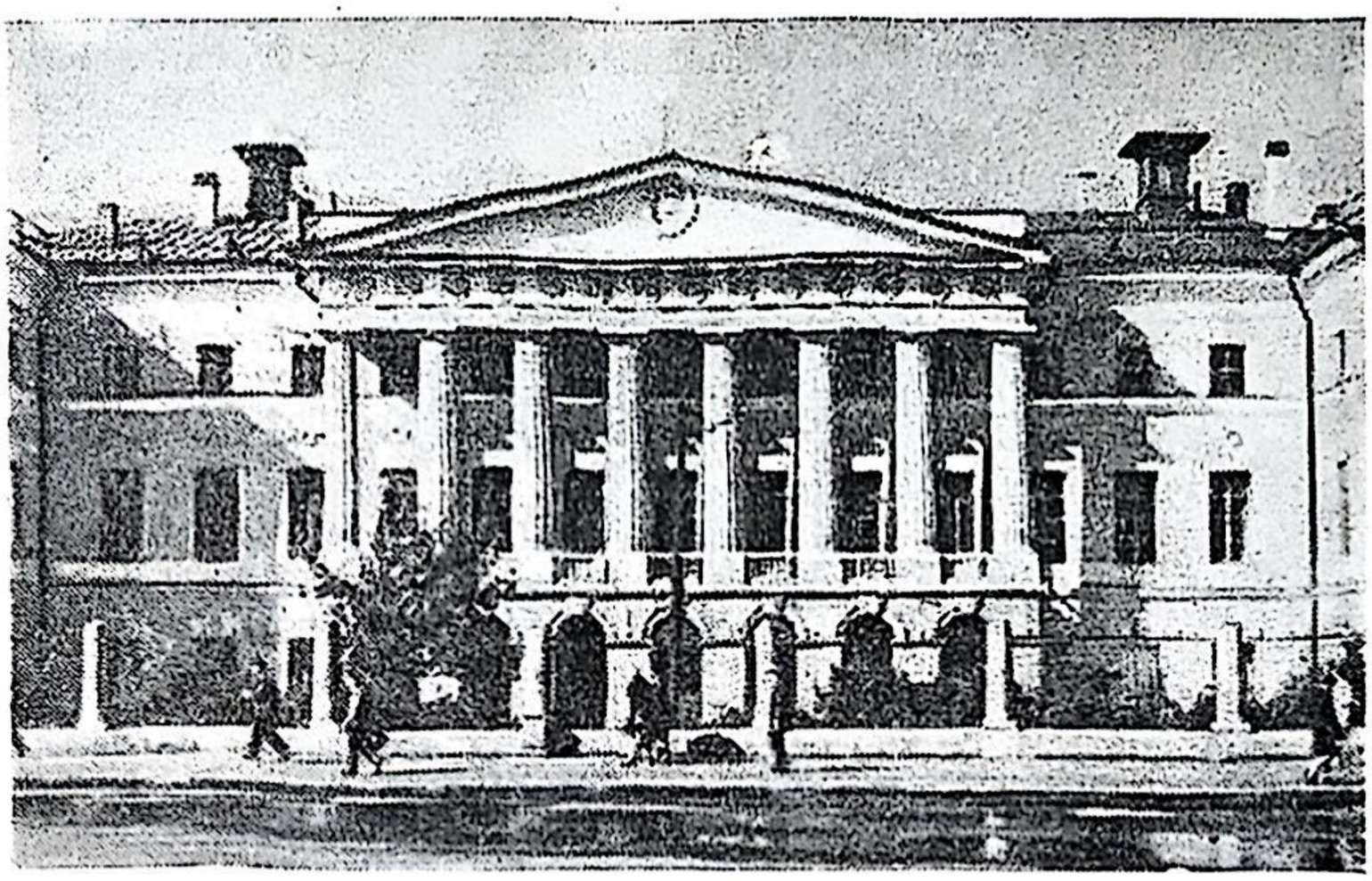
Long a treasure house of ancient Russian lore, Moscow now became the centre of the literary struggle for a new living Russian language, a struggle which ended in the acceptance of the new language and new subject matter thus strengthening the bond between life and letters.

When Peter I moved the capital of Russia to St. Petersburg, Moscow in no way lost its significance as a major economic, political and cultural centre of Russia.

The importance of Moscow as a centre of the national life of the Russian people manifested itself with tremendous force during the terrible but majestic events of 1812.

In 1808, when *Russky Vestnik*, a magazine published by S. Glinka and designed according to him "to rouse the national spirit for the inevitable struggle against Napoleon" began to appear in Moscow, Colencourt, the French ambassador, protested to Alexander I

The old building of Moscow University



The Museum of the Revolution (The English Club in Pushkin's time)

against the publication of this magazine which declared war on Napoleon before the Russian emperor did.

S. Glinka was the first Moscovite to join the popular levies in 1812. His example was followed by a number of other Moscow writers. P. Vyazemsky, F. Glinka, A. Norov and other Moscow men of letters fought in the Battle of Borodino. Denis Davydov, a poet, and as he called himself, "son of whitestone Moscow," was the organizer and inspirer of the partisan movement. V. Zhukovsky, Moscow writer and journalist, who marched with Kutuzov's staff, wrote reports of the battles he witnessed and himself took part in. From the Russian camp at Tarutin he sent to the Russian people his immortal message in verse, *Minstrel in the Russian Warriors' Camp*, dedicated to the heroes of the Battle of Borodino.

The feeling of national unity and the desire of freedom aroused at the time of the war against Napoleon and manifested with particular strength in Moscow was subdued but not crushed by the reactionary forces let loose by Nicholas I.

"Moscow, to all appearances, drowsy and dull, taken up with gossip, prayers, weddings and trivial nothings, would each time awaken at the call of need, meeting the situation when a storm brewed over Russia." These words belong to A. Herzen, fervent champion of the people's liberty, over whose cradle the great fire of Moscow's liberation cast its glare. At the age of thirteen Herzen, together with his friend Ogarev standing on Sparrow Hills, with the city of Moscow spreading below, swore to devote their lives to the struggle for the liberation of the Russian people.

Fifty-seven of the men who took part in the revolutionary movement of the Decembrists in the first quarter of the 19th century came from Moscow, where a whole generation of adherents of this movement grew up.

It was the Moscow of the overt and covert supporters of the Decembrists, the Moscow of Chatsky (hero of Griboyedov's *Wit Works Woe*), that heartily welcomed Pushkin on his return from exile.

Pushkin, the father of the new Russian literature, was born in a suburb of Moscow on May 26, 1799. Throughout his life he remained deeply attached to Moscow, the heart of Russia:

> Oftimes in doleful exile
> By blundering destiny led,
> Moscow, I thought of thee!
> Moscow, how sweet 'tis said!
> The Russian heart has found
> Such wealth in that one sound!

It was to a circle of Moscow's young literati, in the home of D. Venevitinov, a talented young poet, that Pushkin first read his *Boris Godunov*. This tragedy, banned by Nicholas I, roused the admiration of the young writers' circle which the very next year founded the *Moskovsky Vestnik*, a magazine designated to popularize Pushkin's writings.

The decade between 1830 and 1840 witnessed in Moscow the stirring up of progressive thought in quest of social and philosophic truth. A great role in this process belongs to Moscow University which educated a galaxy of writers, publicists and critics.

Alexander Griboyedov, author of *Wit Works Woe*, attended Moscow University. So well was this writer acquainted with Moscow life and so vividly and faithfully did he portray it in his comedy that the term "Griboyedov's Moscow" has come to have a definite historic and literary connotation. However, Griboyedov's scathing and relentless criticism of the Moscow of serf-owning landlords, corrupt officials, ignoramuses and reactionaries, was prompted by his fervent dream of a different Moscow, the Moscow of progressive people, represented by Chatsky, the hero of his play. The critic Vissarion Belinsky who also attended Moscow University, described Griboyedov's comedy as "the product of a mighty talent, a precious gem of Russian literature."

In the thirties of the last century the more advanced representatives of Russia's revolutionary democrats, who set out to elaborate the fundamentals of a democratic

world outlook, rallied around Vissarion Belinsky. Belinsky himself in his student drama *Dmitri Kalinin*, following the example of Radishchev, glorified freedom and announced his hatred of serfdom. In his *Literary Meditations* he defined Russian literature as the literature of "living truth and emancipating thought."

T. Granovsky, of whom Chernyshevsky wrote: "our history knows few personalities who exercised such potent influence in arousing our sympathies for the higher human interests"—lectured on world history at Moscow University:

It was at a Moscow circle led by Herzen and Ogarev that the spark of socialist thought was first ignited in Russia. In his diary Herzen wrote that in the socialist ideas of his day was to be found the pattern of a world community, the *membra disecta* of the great future formula of socialism.

It is, therefore, only natural that one of the buildings of the Moscow University should be graced by a monument to Lomonosov, champion of the freedom of science, and another by statues of Ogarev and Herzen whose magazine *Kolokol* (The Bell) sounded the battle cry for liberty.

In 19th-century Moscow the treasures of Russian folk poetry were collected. The year 1800 saw the publication of the first edition of *The Lay of Igor's Host*, that great epic of ancient Russia. In 1818 the publication of Kirsha Danilov's *Ancient Russian Verse*, a collection of *byliny*, first acquainted the Russian reader with the great treasures of his country's folklore. P. Yakushkin, P. Rybnikov, A. Gilferding, famous as collectors of tales woven around the *bogatyrs*, the heroes of yore, all came from Moscow.

Moscow Russian, such as it was spoken by Krylov, Pushkin, Lermontov and Ostrovsky became Russia's accepted literary language, the language of the university and the Russian theatre.

Moscow is the birthplace of the national theatre, strong in its deep bonds with life's truth and free thought. In the Maly Theatre, erected in 1824, audiences were swept by the stirring performances of the ardent Mochalov and here Shchepkin founded the school of Russian stage realism.

The Maly was never a court theatre and its tradition of realistic acting may be traced to the thirties and forties of the last century. The art of the theatre reached great heights in the post-reform years (the Reform of 1861, abolishing serfdom). For its success this theatre is greatly indebted to the plays of Alexander Ostrovsky whose name is closely bound up with the history of the Maly Theatre in the second half of the 19th century. A monument to the playwright now stands in front of the theatre.

The plays of Ostrovsky, a true Moscovite, presented pictures of every-day life. His characters were drawn from bankrupt noblemen, from various groups of the thriving bourgeoisie, from officials of every rank, and from the democratic intelligentsia. Ostrovsky was often referred to as the playwright who described "a society ruled by the power of money."

In 1880 a monument to Alexander Pushkin in Moscow, erected with funds subscribed by the people to a design by the sculptor Opekushin was unveiled. Dostoyevsky, Turgenev; Ostrovsky, Pisemsky, Maikov, Polonsky, Grigorovich, Klyuchevsky and other writers and scholars were present at the ceremony:

The unveiling of the monument was a great event for Russian letters. One of the most stirring addresses on the occasion was delivered by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. He, too, was born in Moscow, in the old building of the Mariinsky Hospital, where his father was a physician and where the writer spent his childhood.

In the year 1882 Moscow took its first census. In his pamphlet *On the Census in Moscow* Leo Tolstoy, whose entire literary career is bound up with Moscow, stressed how necessary it was to fight against the poverty which existed among the city workers. "There is no other obligation, social, administrative, or scientific that is more important than that," he wrote.

Tolstoy's thoughts and observations and the conclusions at which he arrives in his pamphlet *On the Census* and in his article entitled *So What Must We Do?* are given artistic form in many of his works—*Resurrection*, *The Living Corpse*, *Hadji Murat*, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, and *The Master and the Workman*, all written in his modest, wooden dwelling in one of the side streets of Moscow which now bears his name.

In 1880-1890 the literary life of Moscow centered around Chekhov.

Moscow acclaimed Chekhov, both the young, gay "Antosha Chekhonte" and the mature writer of *Ward No. 6*, *Story of an Unknown Man* and other stories published in the Moscow magazine *Russkaya Mysl* (Russian Thought). Chekhov severely condemns life encased in the shell of smug philistinism and pusillanimity. It is interesting to note that in his *Three Sisters*, the heroines filled with loathing for philistine complacency and pining for a life of free labour, place all their hopes in Moscow "To Moscow! To Moscow!"—is their yearning cry.

And in 1898, to give utterance to Chekhov's plays, a new theatre came into being in Moscow—the Moscow Art Theatre.

Stanislavsky, also a Moscow man, the founder of this theatre, and the spirit behind it, was the first to work out a scientific system of the actor's art. His book, working out this system, and translated into many languages, is permeated with the spirit of realism.

In the autumn of 1889 a youth, as yet unknown, knocked on the gate of Tolstoy's home in Moscow. He longed to see the great writer and speak to him. Tolstoy, however, happened to be out. The youth was Maxim Gorky. He was not destined to meet Tolstoy until many years later, in 1900. Gorky was a frequent visitor to Moscow, but the tsarist gendarmes forbade him entry into the city.

At the end of 1890 and the beginning of 1900 there was already in Moscow the feeling of an impending storm—the storm of the oncoming revolution.

The coming of the new era could be sensed at the opening nights of Gorky's

The Leo Tolstoy's museum-house in Moscow

and Chekhov's plays at the Moscow Art Theatre.

With bitterness Gorky wrote to Chekhov: "Ah, if they would only let me come to Moscow!" However, only on very few occasions did Gorky succeed in breaking through the police restrictions.

After the October Revolution Gorky frequently came to Moscow, where he visited Lenin and conversed with him. In 1928 he returned to Moscow from abroad, where he had gone for a cure.

On his return he was naturally anxious to learn all about new, Soviet Moscow and in one of his letters he writes: "I walked through the streets . . . saw a good deal that was interesting. . . It's very stimulating and good to be here. The country, or, to be more exact, Moscow, has grown much younger. The city is cleaner, there are more people; a mad rush of tramcar, bus and motor car traffic, many handsome shops, new buildings. Everything is full of interest, new and lively. Loudspeakers—in the squares, music in the gardens. . . ."

The literary life of post-revolutionary Moscow is inseparably linked with Gorky's name. He was inspirer and organizer of numerous publications. He gave much thought to the fostering and training of the new generation of young writers from among the numerous nationalities of the Soviet Union. At writers' congresses and conferences he would be the main speaker. Two literary institutes in Moscow—the Research Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences and the Literary Institute for Young Writers—bear his name.

The realistic plays of Gogol, Griboyedov, Ostrovsky, and Chekhov have won Russian drama world renown. In Maxim Gorky we see consummated the process of the development of pre-revolutionary realism. Gorky became the father of Socialist realism.

Valeri Bryussov, the poet, was born in Moscow. Here he graduated the university, lived and wrote. Moscow also saw Alexei Tolstoy begin his career as writer and dramatist. In Alexei Tolstoy's *Peter I* a number of vivid scenes of the early 18th-century Moscow are drawn. A picture of Moscow of the first years of the Revolution is painted in Alexei Tolstoy's trilogy *The Road to Calvary*. In his stirring articles written during the recent war Alexei Tolstoy speaks of Moscow's defense in 1941 as rousing the whole nation to the fight for victory.

Vladimir Mayakovsky lived and worked in Moscow. Mayakovsky's voice thundered in Moscow's squares, in clubs, in the Press Club and in the Bolshoi Theatre. Time and again at the Moscow Polytechnical Museum, the Moscow writers' forum, Mayakovsky was heard extolling his great and free country, and pouring out his wrath at the last representatives of spiritual philistinism, trivial thoughts and cheap estheticism.

Of Moscow Mayakovsky wrote:

Moscow of white stone,
Moscow of red stone
always
to me
dear and magnificent!

Mayakovsky's description of Moscow paying her last respects to Lenin in his poem *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin* is one of the most powerful and stirring pieces of Soviet poetry.

Never has literary Moscow been so full of vigour and vitality as in Soviet times. The Soviet Writers' Union has its headquarters in Moscow. Here some of the largest publishing houses in the land are located—*State Literary Publishing House*, *Soviet Writer* Publishing House, *Young Guard* Publishing House, *Children's Publishing House* and others. In Moscow are published the numerous magazines dealing with literature and literary criticism— *Novy Mir*, *Oktyabr*, *Znamya*, *Soviet Literature* (published in four languages), and others. The country's largest libraries, a Literary Museum, the Book Chamber of the U. S. S. R., are located in Moscow. In the club of the Moscow University public lectures are delivered to large audiences on subjects relating to Russian and Western literature.

In the days of the Great Patriotic War in 1942, Constantine Simonov wrote "Moscow! To the Russian people you were ever the symbol of the Homeland, the symbol of life. And from now on you shall yet be a symbol of victory, a victory which does not come by itself but must be won, as you have won it at your ancient walls, Moscow."

In Alexander Fadeyev's novel *The Young Guard*, the youths and girls of Krasnodon, engaged in unequal combat with the enemy, gain fresh strength as they listen in to the voice of Moscow over the radio.

"The breath of the vast world, surrounding their little town, trampled in the mire by the enemy soldiers' boots, the mighty trembling of their native soil, the throb of nocturnal Moscow invaded the room and filled their hearts with the happy consciousness that they belonged to that world."

The glory of Moscow is sung in the languages of all the peoples of the U. S. S. R. Separated by thousands of kilometres from the Soviet capital, Jambul, the grey-haired bard of the steppes of Kazakhstan, chanted:

Glory is sung to you, dear to all hearts,
Bright city of Stalin—Red Moscow!

Moscow has become the focal point of the most progressive ideas of humanity. Hundreds of millions of working people all over the world look with hope and affection toward Moscow, champion of the independence and freedom of all peoples.

MOSCOW WRITERS AND THE OCTOCENTENARY

While the 800th anniversary of the foundation of Moscow was celebrated by the whole country the greatest festivities took place naturally in the Soviet capital itself. Representatives of the sixteen constituent republics of the Union and a large number of guests from abroad visited the city for the occasion. Gaily bedecked and eternally young despite her 800 years, Moscow celebrated her birthday to the accompaniment of grand illuminations, fireworks and the strains of music. Carnival crowds filled the parks, public gardens, streets and squares.

Preparations for the festive day were begun long before September 7th, the official gala day. Lectures, talks, concerts, readings by poets and prose writers, all devoted to Moscow, drew large audiences. Special exhibitions were arranged in literary and history museums.

The Union of Soviet Writers sponsored a special program for the occasion; the program included a series of literary and musical evenings at the Writers' Club run under the general title of "Moscow in the Past, Present and Future." This cycle included a lecture by Professor Sergei Bakhrushin, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, on the history of Moscow and another by a prominent architect Academician Alexei Shchusev on Moscow's great reconstruction plan.

A number of Moscow's "old inhabitants" led audiences of writers on imaginary excursions through old Moscow, illustrating their talks with photographs and pictures. One of these talks was by P. Sytin who had much of interest to say about the history of Moscow street names.

A number of well-organized excursions provided writers with detailed information on the work of Moscow's gigantic industries and varied cultural institutions.

There were also a number of excursions to the environs of Moscow that are connected with the names of writers who once lived there: "Abramtsevo", Aksakov's estate where the flower of Russian writers and artists gathered at the end of the last century; Chekhov's house in Melekhovo, and many other places of interest.

At one of the soirées in the Writer's Club there was a friendly competition between Moscow poets who had written verses about their city: Agnia Barto, the children's poetess, read selections from her book *I Live in Moscow*, which she wrote for the anniversary. The little hero of the poem tells of his street, the place where Moscow begins for him; the story is marked with the directness of childish perception, and is full of the joy of life.

Lev Oshanin's poem contains a short history of Moscow: he led his listeners from the "primeval forest depths," where the axe rang out 800 years ago to clear a way for the future city, to the ruby stars that glow on the Kremlin towers of the present-day Moscow.

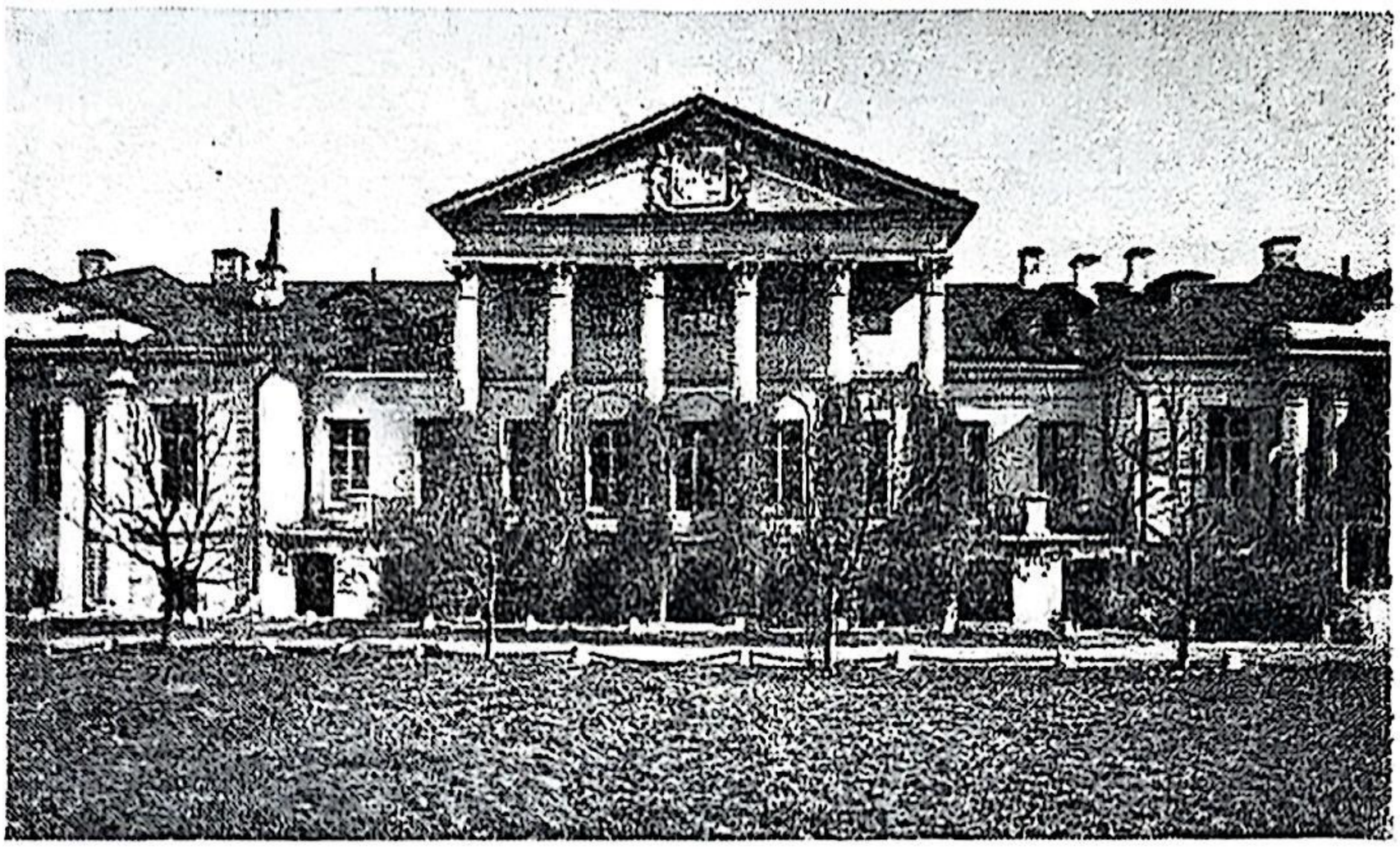
Soviet Moscow by Sergei Vassiliev, had a fresh and youthful ring to it. The lofty style of these verses harmonized well with the feelings of all true Moscovites. Vassiliev has witnessed everything that went in to make up the modern Moscow—the reconstruction of Pushkin Square, the evolution of the old "AMO" plant into the present Stalin Automobile Plant, the building of the Moscow Underground. Vassiliev took part in the Battle of Moscow in 1941. In his poems he describes the new Krimsky Bridge, the exhibition of war trophies in Gorky Central Park, the constant procession of visitors to the Lenin Mausoleum, and the Soviet Army parade on the Red Square.

On that same evening Mikhail Matusovsky read his *Seventh Symphony in Moscow*, a poem dedicated to the stern wartime Moscow.

Vera Inber read three poems about Moscow: *Moscow For Ever*, the poem written for the anniversary, her poem *The Common Way*, written about Moscow in Leningrad during the siege in 1942, and an old poem called *Moscow in Norway* recording the poetess' conversation with a Norwegian fisherman.

Glory to Moscow by the Belorussian poet Petrus Brovka, A *Jewel of the Earth* by the Ukrainian poet Maxim Rylsky, *Moscow* by the Armenian poet Ghegam Saryan, *Moscow* by the Kazakh poet Gali Ormanov and dozens of other poems by authors from all the Soviet republics expressed pride and admiration for the glorious city.

On September 7th all the press carried articles and stories about Moscow. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* devoted an entire number to the anniversary—articles in that number were by Vsevolod Ivanov *The Heights of Fame*, Ivan Novikov *Over Half a Century in Moscow*, Boris Lavrenev *The Pride of the Soviet Citizen*, Anna Karavayeva, and others.



The House of the Union of Soviet Writers believed to be depicted by Leo Tolstoy in War and Peace *as Count Rostov's house*

MOSCOW IN WORKS OF ART

The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts organized a special exhibition on the occasion of Moscow's octocentenary.

The exhibits show many aspects of Moscow—the white stone mass of the Kremlin churches (A. Vasnetsov), the contours of the Khimky River Port appearing through the mist (A. Morozov's *Building of the Moscow-Volga Canal*), and the severely simple granite mausoleum (M. Matorin's *The Lenin Mausoleum*). A network of builders' scaffolding (Z. Kulikova's *The Building of Okhotny Ryad, The Building of Kamenny Bridge*), the stern outline of factory buildings (A. Romas' *The Suburb*), the scintillating lights of the *Victory Salute* (M. Babyshev), and the quiet nooks in Ivan Pavlov's engravings—all this is Moscow.

The old Moscow with its low, squat, log houses is shown on the picture *Yuri Dolgoruky* by P. Dobrynin. The marble portal against a dark red background of the Moscow Soviet, the network of its gilded railings and the splashes of light made by passing cars show us the new Moscow in A. Gerasimov's *Gorky Street*.

The history of any ancient city consists of the gradual change from old to new and every city grows up in its own way thus acquiring its own specific aspect. The gallery of paintings and engravings depicts the changes wrought in Moscow in the course of 800 years. The Cathedral of St. Basil stands surrounded by a moat in the picture by G. Gorelov. The richly adorned building presents a glaring contrast to the rickety corduroy roads typical of 16th-century Moscow. In the picture *Old Departing Moscow and the New City* by V. Baksheyev, one of the U.S.S.R.'s oldest artists, a row of little two-storey houses is shown and behind them the graceful lines of new tall buildings. In K. Kupetsio's water colours *An Arch on Gorky Street*, in A. Romodanovskaya's *Gates of the Moscow Soviet Building*, in I. Sokolov's fine drawings *Military Hospital, Institute of Physical Training* and I. Pavlov's linoleums *Academy of Sciences, Corner of Old Square* we see the new Soviet Moscow.

There are a number of works of art dealing with the Patriotic War of 1812 which depict the fierce battles fought for Moscow; *The Military Council at Fili in 1812* (A. Kivshenko), *Lauriston at Kutuzov's Headquarters* (N. Ulyanov). Among the most impressive of the exhibited works of art are those depicting the last war, pictures by A. Laptev, A. Deineka; alert, grim, blacked-out Moscow in *Moscow on the Defensive* by I. Pavlov, C. Yuon's *Parade on the Red Square, November 7th, 1941*, and others.

Moscow was the citadel of three revolutions. The events of 1905 are shown by Kukryniksy on a picture where against a background formed by the barricades erected in Krasnaya Presnya—the working-class quarter of Moscow—two men are leading a wounded man away. A. Gerasimov's *Lenin on the Platform*, depicts Lenin making a fiery speech in the first months of the Revolution of 1917. The pictures by F. Modorov *Stalin and Kalinin*, G. Shegal *Leader, Teacher and Friend* and V. Yofanov *An Unforgettable Meeting* show Stalin and his comrades-in-arms and their meetings with ordinary people of the country.

The history of a city is bound with the people that inhabit it, with their life and work. This theme is presented in Y. Pimenov's *New Moscow*, the oils by G. Satel and R. Sletov, the lithographs of Y. Korovin, in B. Zenkevich's *Building the Metropolitan* series. I. Sokolov's engraving *The Rolling Shop of the Hammer and Sickle Plant* is representative of the theme of labour, of labour that has become a matter of honour, glory and heroism.

The exhibition also presented the models of the new statues and monuments that are to be erected in Moscow. Amongst these is the monument to Yuri Dolgoruky, the founder of Moscow, which will be erected on the square facing the building of the Moscow Soviet and the foundation stone of which was laid on the day of the 800th anniversary. A horseman standing in his stirrups points into the distance with an imperative gesture. The impatient movement of the horse and its proudly arched neck emphasize the solemn immobility of the rider. (The author of the project is Sergei Orlov.) The models of monu-

ments to Dzerzhinsky and Kutuzov (S. Merkurov), Shcherbakov (M. Manizer), Alexei Tolstoy and Chekhov (G. Motovilov), Chaikovsky (V. Mukhina) and to Mayakovsky (I. Chaikov) are some of the finest.

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In the Dzerzhinsky Park at Ostankino in Moscow there was an exhibition of the works of 32 artists. Here again the subject was Moscow, its history, its present life, its people and its art.

The exhibition opens with a lithograph by the engraver A. Baransky—*Building of the Kremlin in the 16th Century*. The artist has succeeded in depicting the great enthusiasm of the Russian workers who built the Kremlin. He stresses the joy of creative labour that is so typical for the Russian national character.

A. Vanetsian's splendid drawing of *Borodino* depicts the meeting place of two epochs: after the defeat of the Germans at Moscow in the fierce winter of 1942, a detachment of Soviet troops is crossing the field on which the Battle of Borodino was fought in 1812. Some of the soldiers, bareheaded, pause by the monument to those who fell at Borodino, others continue their arduous march to the West, carrying with them the fascist colours they have captured. The picture gives one a feeling of a living bond between the two periods, the continuity of the heroism of the Russian people.

Most of the pictures exhibited depict Soviet Moscow. These paintings and drawings of a gigantic city with broad streets, spacious squares, tall houses, an underground railway, endless streams of pedestrians, give the viewer a feeling of the grandeur and the new beauty of the ancient city that has become the capital of the Soviet Union and that has been transformed beyond all recognition during the period covered by the five-year plans.

Only a few of the exhibits are mere "views" of the most famous streets, squares and buildings (some of the pictures by I. Sokolov, N. Anatoliev, F. Smirnov, A. Iglin). In the majority of the pictures, however, architecture serves only as a background to people's life in workaday and holiday Moscow.

Here is a picture of the slowly moving queue of people outside the Lenin Mausoleum, waiting to do homage at the tomb of the founder of the Soviet State (V. Zavialov's *Mausoleum*). The painter Yu. Pimenov, is, in his own words, "producing a painted book of Moscow stories, stories about fine, ordinary people of our great times." His *First Snow* is one of the best pages from this book. The artist has succeeded in giving an ordinary scene of city life, great strength and freshness, embodying bright and virile lyricism in his work.

Two coloured linoleums by I. Sokolov depict Moscow in wartime—*Kremlin Towers* (1943) reflects the feeling of tenseness, the high emotional strain typical of Moscow in the decisive years of the war; when the great day of victory came Sokolov recorded it in his *Salute*, probably the best of the many pictures on this subject.

Stalin and Moscow are indivisibly connected in the minds of people of the whole world and the artist N. Anatoliev expresses this, drawing his portrait of Stalin against a background of the Kremlin wall.

Among the other portraits exhibited are several of prominent Moscow intellectuals—the actor M. Narokov (by V. Yefanov), the pianist Yakov Fliere (by I. Birstein), and others.

There are a number of pictures in the exhibition that are not directly connected with Moscow thematically, however, they all belong to Moscow artists and give a good idea of the versatility of their work. Of great artistic merit are the *Uzbek Girl* by S. Gerasimov, the lyrical landscapes by V. Baksheyev and V. Byalinitsky-Birulya, the decorative still life by N. Popov and Olga Kolmakova.

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